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# THE FORTUNATE LOVERS.

## WRITINGS

OF

## A. MARY F. ROBINSON.

A HANDFUL OF HONEYSUCKLE. Kegan Paul.

THE CROWNED HIPPOLYTUS. Kegan Paul.

EMILY BRONTË. (Eminent Women Series.)

ARDEN: A Novel. Longmans.

THE NEW ARCADIA. Longmans.

AN ITALIAN GARDEN. Fisher Unwin.

MARGARET OF ANGOULÊME. (Eminent Women Series.)

Marguerite d'Angoulême, queen of Navarre

THE

# FORTUNATE LOVERS

TWENTY-SEVEN NOVELS OF THE

QUEEN OF NAVARRE

*TRANSLATED FROM THE ORIGINAL FRENCH*

By ARTHUR MACHEN

EDITED, AND SELECTED FROM THE HEPTAMERON, WITH NOTES, PEDIGREES, AND AN INTRODUCTION

By A. MARY F. ROBINSON

With Original Etching by G. P. Jacomb Hood

LONDON

GEORGE REDWAY

YORK STREET, COVENT GARDEN

MDCCCLXXXVII

To

THE LADIES AND ANTIQUARIES
OF ENGLAND.

# TABLE OF PERSONAGES.

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| *Oisille*, | Louise de Savoie. | Franck, Génin, Lacroix, Le Roux de Lincy. |
| *Parlamente*, | Margaret of Angoulême. | Same authorities. |
| *Hircan*, | Henry of Navarre. | Franck. M. Le Roux de Lincy suggested Charles of Alençon, but the arguments of M. Franck carry conviction. |
| *Longarine*, | Aimée Motier de la Fayette. | Franck. M. Le Roux suggested Mme. de Châtillon, who is obviously far too old. M. Montaiglon gives his vote to the daughter of Aimée: Françoise de Silly. |
| *Ennasuitte*, | Anne de Vivonne, Mme. de Bourdeille. | Le Roux de Lincy, followed by all authorities. |
| *Simontault*, | François de Bourdeille. | Franck, followed by Montaiglon. There is no ground for supposing with Le Roux that Simontault represents Henri d'Albret. |
| *Dagoucin*, | Nicolas Dangu, Abbé de Juilly. | Franck. Lacroix has declared for the Comte D'Agoust. |
| *Geburon*, | M. de Burye. | Franck and Montaiglon. |
| *Nomerfide*, | Isabeau d'Albret. | Mary Robinson. Le Roux declared for Mme. de Châteaubriand, Franck for Mme. de Montpézat. |
| *Saffredent*, | René de Rohan. | Mary Robinson. Franck interprets this character as Montpézat (a score of years too old), Le Roux as Bonnivet, to whom the same objection must be made. |

# CONTENTS.

PAGE

INTRODUCTION . . . . . 1

PROLOGUE . . . . . 55

## DAY THE FIRST.

IN WHICH DAY ARE RECOUNTED THE BAD TURNS DONE BY WOMEN TO MEN, AND BY MEN TO WOMEN.

### NOVEL I.

The misdeeds of the wife of a certain proctor, who had a bishop for her gallant . . . . . 70

### NOVEL II.

The wife of a muleteer had rather death than dishonour . . 84

### NOVEL IX.

A relation of a perfect love, and the pitiful end thereof . . 90

### NOVEL X.

Florida, hard pressed by her lover, virtuously resists him, and on his death takes the veil . . . . . 97

## DAY THE SECOND.

ON THE SECOND DAY EACH ONE TELLS THE FIRST CONCEIT THAT RISETH IN HIS BRAIN.

PAGE

PROLOGUE . . . . . 136

NOVEL XII.

A Duke of Florence would have his friend prostitute his sister to him; but in place of love meets with death . . . . 137

NOVEL XIII.

How a sea-captain served love with the sauce of religion . . 147

NOVEL XVII.

King Francis shows his courage that t is well approved . . 160

NOVEL XIX.

A pitiful case of two lovers who turn at last monk and nun . 166

## DAY THE THIRD.

ON THE THIRD DAY RELATION IS MADE OF THE LADIES THAT HAVE HAD NO AIM BUT HONOUR; AND OF THE ABOMINABLE HYPOCRISY OF THE MONKS.

PROLOGUE . . . . . 180

NOVEL XXI.

The steadfast and honourable love of Rolandine, who after many sorrows at last finds happiness . . . . . 181

NOVEL XXIV.

PAGE

The cruelty of the Queen of Castille to one of her lovers, and the profit he took thereby . . . . . 205

NOVEL XXVIII.

A notable pasty, and what was found therein . . . 215

NOVEL XXIX.

A parson's ready wit . . . . . 218

## DAY THE FOURTH.

ON THE FOURTH DAY RELATION IS MADE FOR THE MOST PART OF THE VIRTUOUS PATIENCE AND LONG-SUFFERING OF WOMEN TO WIN THEIR HUSBANDS; AND OF THE PRUDENCE USED OF MEN TOWARDS THEIR WIVES FOR THE PRESERVING OF THE HONOUR OF THEIR HOUSES AND LINEAGE.

PROLOGUE . . . . . 222

NOVEL XXXII.

The notable way in which a gentleman punished his wife whom he had taken in adultery . . . . . 223

NOVEL XXXIV.

A very merry case of two Grey Friars who lodged in the house of a butcher . . . . . 231

NOVEL XXXIX.

In what manner my lord of Grignaulx exorcised an evil spirit . 236

NOVEL XL.

PAGE

Wherein is given the cause wherefore Rolandine's father made build the castle in the forest . . . . . 239

## DAY THE FIFTH.

ON THE FIFTH DAY RELATION IS MADE OF THE VIRTUOUSNESS OF SUCH MAIDS AND WIVES OF WHOM HONOUR HATH BEEN PREFERRED BEFORE PLEASURE; OF THEM LIKEWISE WHO HAVE DONE THE CONTRARY THERETO; AND OF THE SIMPLENESS OF CERTAIN OTHERS.

PROLOGUE . . . . . 248

NOVEL XLIV.

How a Grey Friar, for telling the truth, receives two pigs in place of one . . . . . 249

## DAY THE SIXTH.

ON THE SIXTH DAY RELATION IS MADE OF THE DECEITS BETWEEN MAN AND WOMAN, THROUGH COVETOUSNESS, VENGEANCE, AND CRAFTINESS.

PROLOGUE . . . . . 254

NOVEL LI.

The cruel and treacherous vengeance of an Italian nobleman upon a woman that had done him a displeasure . . . . 255

NOVEL LV.

PAGE
How a widow sold a horse for a ducat and a cat for ninety-and-nine 260

NOVEL LVI.

Of a cozening device of an old friar . . . . . 263

NOVEL LVII.

The great delectation taken by an English lord in a very small matter 270

NOVEL LX.

How a man, for putting too great trust in his wife, fell into much misery . . . . . 274

## DAY THE SEVENTH.

ON THE SEVENTH DAY RELATION IS MADE OF THEM THAT HAVE DONE WHAT THEY LEAST DESIRED.

PROLOGUE . . . . . 280

NOVEL LXI.

Of the shamelessness and impudency of a certain woman who forsook her husband's house to live with a canon . . . 281

NOVEL LXIV.

A lady delaying to wed her lover, drove him into such inward discontent that he turned friar, and would have no more acquaintance with her . . . . . 291

NOVEL LXV.

PAGE

A very admirable miracle, which may serve as an example of all others . . . . . 296

NOVEL LXVI.

A lord and lady sleeping together were mistaken by an old dame for a prothonotary and a servant-maid, and were sharply reproved of her . . . . . 298

NOVEL LXVII.

How a woman trusted in God amidst the lions . . . 302

NOVEL LXXII.

The case of a monk and a nun that wrought evil in the presence of the dead . . . . . 306

---

ALLIANCE OF THE HOUSES OF ROHAN, ANGOULEME, AND BRITTANY . . . *facing page* 181

PEDIGREE OF MARGARET OF ANGOULEME . . 311

HOUSE OF ORLEANS . . . . . 312

# INTRODUCTION.

## I.

### 1509.

THE bride was seventeen years old, tall, of a slender carriage, and there were enthusiasts who avowed that she was beautiful, so highly did they rate that air of humility blended with innate distinction, those thick blonde tresses, and the smile of pathetic radiance that lit the large features and the small expressive eyes. A less indulgent critic would deny the gift of beauty to Margaret of Angoulême; but she was at least a young girl upon her wedding day. There were, however, so many royal personages at the wedding, that half the lookers-on forgot the bride.

Behind Madame Marguerite and her bridegroom, the dull and rustic young Duke of Alençon, stood a childish pair, themselves contracted in the bonds of marriage. The wife was the only child of the King and Queen of France, a plain and delicate girl of ten years old; the husband looked a dark vivacious lad of fifteen, eager and chivalrous, as became a descendant of Saint Louis, who numbered among his nearer ancestry Louis of Orleans and Philip of Burgundy, the wise Duke of Milan, the "Green Count" of Savoy, the fantastic Pope Felix V., and the romantic Kings of Cyprus. This picturesque and charming lad, the only brother

of the bride, was Francis of Angoulême, heir to the throne of France in his own right, heir through his wife to the Duchies of Brittany, Orleans, and Milan.

To the spectators of this splendid wedding, these two young people represented the future of France; the present was no less splendidly apparent in the rank of nobles that clustered round King Louis and Queen Anne. It was a brilliant sight, and none the less interesting because half the people in the church could remember when these magnificent grandees had perceived the power of monarchs from a very different point of view. For ninety years previous to the accession of Louis XII., the House of Orleans had dwelt in dungeons, in camps of mutiny, in odour of suspicion and disgrace. England and France and Milan had united to their detriment; yet the elastic, vital race escaped alive. Alive, but not undisciplined by long misfortune. The King himself and the King's father, the bride's father and grandfather, had languished for many years in prison. The bridegroom's grandfather, twice condemned to death, had died at last in his dungeon; and the son of that man, the father of the bridegroom, was that unlucky René d'Alençon, fed with a fork, like an imprisoned beast, through the iron bars of the infamous cage of Louis XI. Yet Alençon was no descendant of that murdered Louis of Orleans, from whom so many here were sprung—the King and the Queen, their only child, the heir to the throne, the young bride standing at the altar, and, in her company, Mme. de Coëtivy and Mme. de la Trémouille. But during the ninety years of discord which had avenged the death of the murdered Duke, the chivalrous friendship of the House of Alençon had counted no cost in the service and defence of Orleans.

To-day the debt was acknowledged. Eleven years ago, when the sudden death of Charles VIII. had called the Duke of Orleans to the throne, Louis had cried, with the magnanimity of his race, "The King forgets the injuries of Orleans!" But the friends of Orleans, the King remembered. Despite the ambition of his wife, he had married his only child to the fatherless son of Angoulême. Despite the ambition of the Countess of Angoulême, he rejected the King of England and the King of Spain (who both aspired to wed her daughter), and to-day the pearl of the House of Orleans was bestowed upon Alençon.

In this the King was generous; nor was he only generous, but wise. The marriage of Margaret of Angoulême to the Duke of Alençon was the last of a series of events destined to reconcile to the Crown the great feudal houses. For more than a hundred years the princes of Orleans and Burgundy, of Brittany, Angoulême, and Alençon had filled the length and breadth of France with mutiny and discord. Burgundy was now extinct, or rather, shall we say, transformed into a far more terrible shape, into the child who should grow up as the Emperor Charles V. Yet Burgundy was at least no longer a source of internal disquiet. And eleven years ago Orleans had ascended the throne of France; he had married Brittany, and of late he had given his child to Angoulême. To-day the sister of the future King was married to Alençon. So that these terrible and disastrous houses, dire occasions of the worst incursions of the English, turbulent allies of the country against the Crown, were henceforth to be no more a cause of peril to the monarchy, nay, on this wedding-day of Angoulême and Alençon, the last of them was caught up, absorbed,

transmuted into the Reigning Family, sharing in the final triumph of the House of Orleans.

But, as in the stories of our childhood, *one* host was left unreckoned with, *one* guest was not invited to the festival, *one* danger remained unconciliated to destroy the state. Among the feudal houses of France none had a more placable or a nobler character than the House of Bourbon. To Pierre de Bourbon-Beaujeu, widowed of Mary of Orleans, Louis XI. had married the eldest and wisest of his children; and to this daughter, Anne de Bourbon-Beaujeu, the King bequeathed, on his death-bed, the Regency of France. Anne fulfilled his utmost wishes, and this remarkable woman, small, ailing, destitute of beauty or entrancing accomplishment, imprisoned Orleans, defeated Brittany, exiled Angoulême, and secured an honourable reign for her young brother. But the system of securing the adhesion of the feudal princes by means of a royal marriage was a system which ensured their fidelity during one generation at the price of dangerous pretensions in the next. Anne de Bourbon was an honest woman; yet under her rule the House of Bourbon added wealth to wealth and power to power, becoming preponderate among the other nobles. Had a son been born to the Regent, there is little doubt that on her brother's death a rebellion could have placed upon the throne the heir of the Bourbons, in place of the disgraced and unruly Duke of Orleans. Even as it was, there ensued, as Commines relates, a moment of pause, an instant of uncertainty. But Fortune, which mocks the ambition of princes, had bestowed on the Regent one only child, a deformed and crippled girl incapable of offspring. This daughter,

a great heiress, was betrothed by her father to Charles d'Alençon, the bridegroom at whose wedding I invite you to assist. As Suzanne de Bourbon-Beaujeu was the richest woman in France, the cadets of the House of Bourbon witnessed with suspicion this project for sending so much money out of the family; and when a few months after her engagement to Alençon, Suzanne was suddenly orphaned of her father, her kinsmen and her mother immediately married her to her cousin, Charles de Montpensier, better known as the Constable de Bourbon. This young man of twenty, tragic-eyed, his long pale face wedged between the thick masses of his black hair—this courageous and sinister young soldier with in his veins the blood of the ambitious Bourbons and of the adventurous Gonzagas—was a person of importance in his day. Look at him well! To-day at this triumph of Orleans, when Alençon, Angoulême, and Brittany all gather, loyal and rewarded, round the throne, no tie binds *him*, the richest man in France, either to his present or to his future sovereign. He is that fairy sponsor, neglected, uninvited, who arrives later than the others at the festival, and whose gifts are not the gifts of benediction.

## II.

## 1514.

The Castle of Alençon stands upon the river Sarthe —a great fortress of the Middle Ages (strong enough to stand the siege of England or of Burgundy), with immense round towers guarding the drawbridge. Built of the rough-hewn granite of the country, impregnable

and sovereign, it dominates the city. It appears a fit abode for such a Duke as Charles of Alençon: less a noble than a petty sovereign in his own dominions, paying homage to the King of France as his feudal superior, but dispensing life and death among his subjects, minting his own money and signing his edicts: 'Charles, par le grace de Dieu,' like any king upon the throne. Yet the Castle of Alençon was rather an impressive than a cheerful dwelling-place. A great wooded park stretched for miles beyond the walls out into the country; but not the park, nor the nightingales, nor the verses which young Maître Guillaume de Roville, the excellent Chancellor of the Exchequer, was wont to dedicate to them, could make the Castle of Alençon as delightful to its youthful mistress as the cheerful home, sweet with the love of mother and of brother, gay with all the pleasures and amenities of a learned and sumptuous court, which she had left upon her marriage.

Alençon, on the contrary, was to Margaret's husband the very centre of existence. To him no doubt it appeared a place of metropolitan pleasures, for he had never lived in town, and had spent but little of his time in Courts. His mother had reared him with his two sisters at the pleasant Manor of Mauves, some miles from Alençon. To the Duke, therefore, the ducal city naturally seemed a place of wider social resources than it appeared to Margaret, but this was a small virtue in his eyes, for the Duke was a very serious young man, pious, frugal, conscientious, uninspired. It is perhaps natural that a man should be devoid of gaiety, whose father, having run the whole gauntlet of dissipation and rebellion, having rusted in a cage, and flaunted as a prince's favourite, suddenly, at the approach of old age,

marries a pious wife, allows her to convert him to quietness, and dies of the unused inaction, leaving her to struggle with three little children against a world full of debts and enemies. Luckily for her children, the mother of the little Duke was not only a pious, but a brave and upright woman. She was the daughter of Ferry II. de Vaudemont, and the grand-daughter of René, King of Sicily, and therefore the niece of our tragic Margaret of Anjou, wife of Henry VI. of England. The Dowager-Duchess of Alençon also was christened Margaret; but in no other respect did she resemble her father's sister, unless it were in that courage and capacity for endurance which is the attribute of all virtuous women, be they heroic, or gentle, or austere. The Duchess Margaret was austere; in her childhood she had often thought of her sweet ancestral kinswoman Elizabeth of Hungary, and she had desired to copy her; now was the occasion. Like Elizabeth, she was left a stranger, unprotected in a country full of enemies. The Duchess Margaret acted not only with piety but with prudence. On her husband's death she proclaimed to the citizens of Alençon that she intended to pay all her husband's debts, to act as her own steward, and administer her own affairs. It is to the honour of the people that they respected and helped this courageous woman, who from that day forth lived with her children in the Manor-house at Mauves, frugally and honestly, herself superintending her estates, until by clever management as well as by the most rigid economy, the last debt was paid before her son became of age.

The occasion for frugality was gone, but the habit still remained. When her son's wife, the younger

Margaret, came to live in Alençon, the elder Duchess could not dream how dull, how hard, how monotonous that life which was so suited to herself appeared to a gay young lady from the Court. Margaret, the Duke's mother, found her days were full enough. She managed her own house; and probably in all the length and breadth of France no other great lady provided a large household for no more than 9 francs, 12 sols a day. So great was the elder Duchess's satisfaction in this achievement, that she did not stay to inquire how little the endless round of stewed beef, a joint of mutton, and four pigeons provoked a more capricious palate; there was sufficient and nutritious food. Then there were the estates to manage; for not till 1521 did the elder Duchess remit her stewardship to the Duke, so often absent with the King. Also, beyond and above the satisfaction of her dead husband's creditors, this virtuous lady had contrived to save enough money to provide three Sisterhoods of St Clare with convents in the vicinity of Alençon. To her world-wearied and harassed soul there was no refreshment comparable to that she found in the happy hours that she could spare from her duties at the castle, to weep and pray with these holy women. She had been beautiful, she was of kingly race, she had been educated in the cultured Court of Lorraine; but she had never loved the world; to pray, to work, to love, these were the sole demands of her sweet and pious nature.

This elder lady is, I must confess, infinitely attractive to me; but she, it is very certain, never wrote the "Heptameron," and her virtues are an interruption here. Judging from the tone of the first novel in her daughter-in-law's collection, it seems

probable that the younger Margaret, with her keen young eyes, saw many a flaw and shame, many a grievous hypocrisy in the priests and pious people with whom her husband's mother was surrounded. She had no love for "them that go often to the monastery church, and carry with them paternosters marked with death's heads, and wear their hoods lower than other women, and think to be esteemed wise, but are in truth most foolish." She rebelled against the Saints of Alençon. "What, is it Jacques De Silly, madame, that you believe so perfect? Can you see no fault in this virtuous and successful bishop, this zealous reformer of the scandalous Convent of Almanèches, this builder of markets and houses for the poor, restorer of churches and presbyteries, this rigid yet liberal disciplinarian of his See? Then let me relate to you, madame, a little story of the profaner loves of the excellent Bishop of Séez!" Thus we can imagine Margaret, a point of malice in her eye, unfolding the unedifying adventure which opens the "Heptameron." Margaret, with her strong hatred of pious cant, her scathing contempt for the sins of the clergy, must have seen many things to suspect, and much to question in the half-monastic circle which gathered round the Dowager Duchess. Her description of her self in her youth fits ill into this rather stiff and sombre frame. "A lady of so good a family that there could be no better . . . a woman of joyous life, and the best company possible, living joyously in all sorts of society . . . gay and pious, loving to laugh, young, *en bon point*, of an excellent constitution, so amiable to her admirers, that she may not complain of their miscomprehension . . . yet she goes with her head in the air, sure of her honour."

This light-hearted, good-natured, and worldly young Duchess, whom the readers of this book will learn to know as *Parlamente*, had none the less her sober side. But that sober side was itself suspect in sober Alençon. For the Dowager Duchess was a devoted Catholic; and Margaret, though no Protestant (for Luther was still in his monastery, Calvin still a little child at Noyon, and Lefèbvre d'Etaples but just beginning to print his epoch-making Commentaries), was yet none the less held guilty of sympathy with New Ideas. The "*New Ideas!*" The phrase is eloquent. Can you not imagine the contempt and distrust which it aroused in that city still almost mediæval; in that ancient fortress guarded by moat and drawbridge; in the breast, perhaps, of that saintly Châtelaine, spending her own life in the austere practice of a traditional piety and the diligent stewardship of her son's inheritance!

The younger Margaret was, however, not without companions. I remember no phrase in her writings betraying any intimate affection or sympathy for her husband's mother; but it is certain she had a friendly feeling for both her sisters-in-law. One of these ladies had lately married William Palæologus, Marquis of Monferrat, and had gone to live with him in Italy. The other, Françoise, at this moment was newly married to the Duke of Vendôme. In later days Françoise d'Alençon should share with Marguerite d'Angoulême the honour of being grandmother to Henry IV. of France, and through the whole tenor of their lives these two women kept their early friendship unimpaired. Margaret had also the dear sympathy and companionship of her former governess, Madame de Châtillon, "a very prudent dame," as the "Heptameron" announces, widow of Jacques

de Châtillon-Coligny. Another generation, and the names of Châtillon and of Coligny should ring like a trumpet and pierce like a sword; but the nephews of Madame de Châtillon were yet unborn. Another generation, and the sister of the Duke of Alençon should chiefly be remembered as the mother of Condé, his wife as the mother of the great Jeanne d'Albret of Navarre.

Out of that quiet northern castle the flames of human sacrifices and the disasters of civil battles should depart; but as yet these things were not. Madame Mêre and the Bishop of Séez arranged the reformation of the church, after their fashion, putting glass windows into ruined cathedrals, and founding convents to assist the poor. Upstairs, Madame de Châtillon and Margaret were learning Greek and Latin ("Langues hérétifiques et luthéranifiques"), or reading the last new commentary on the Scriptures sent down from Henri Estienne's printing press in Paris; and they, after their fashion, were planning to reform religion by the establishment of a secular college, the diffusion of polite learning, and the marriage of the clergy. Meanwhile, in front of both alike, the Future, silently cherishing her vial of blood and tears, hovered on tragic wings, unquestioned, disregarded.

Margaret was so devoted to her studies that as, a few years after this, a friend of hers remarked, "she would run to the other end of the world if there was a new doctor of learning to be found there." But, for a sprightly, robust, and affectionate young creature, at twenty, the study of grammar and theology still leaves the heart unsatisfied. Margaret's marriage was not enough to fill this emptiness: she never showed a tender affection for

her husband, and did not quite appreciate the good qualities of this dull young man, trying so earnestly, and with so little brilliance, to do his best in every relation of life. All that was pathetic and respectable, and even inspiring, in this short-sighted idealist, escaped her brilliant, eager young eyes, intolerant of the narrow and the mediocre. It is, perhaps, fortunate that he was so frequently away fighting with his brother-in-law of Angoulême,—earning praise for his courage at Marignan. In his absence her home at Alençon was more endurable to Margaret. Her bright young presence illuminated the castle; she would flash in on the excellent young Chancellor of the Exchequer, she would rouse him to cap verses against her, and no doubt she would spur on his Pegasus by half-malicious praises of a young man of twenty, a protégé of hers, Clément, the son of the poet Jean Marot, who just about this time began to shed a novel lustre on the respectable provincial Ducal Court.

All the same the hours passed slowly. Talking with old Madame de Châtillon, learning Greek and Latin, capping verses with young poets, or even singing to the viol those songs of which the slender, faded notes may still be seen preserved in the library at Pau; all these amusements are a little too much alike. Margaret had not many others, save when she went to Court. Now and then, in her love of the real actual world, she would sally out into the narrow streeted city; up the granite-faced Rue de Valnoble, where the Court officials lived, and where the nobles of the country side (and among others, the Barons of St Aignan) had their town-houses; down the Rue du Jeudi, noisy as Inferno, with swarms of buyers and sellers, all vociferat-

ing together on the narrow, muddy pavement, heaped every Thursday morning with yellow stacks of corn, and bales of silk and wool and linen; through the streets of one-storied houses, where the shopkeepers lived less wealthily, less amply than the bourgeoisie of Paris, and not allowed like those to disport themselves in velvet like people of the highest class; past the dark and tortuous Jewry, out into the faubourg, where dwelt the poor in small hovels, very low, with cellars kept free from dust and air alike, where all day long the loom rattled, the shuttle flew, and pale men and women worked. These laborious weavers would crowd into the doorway as the Duchess passed, the men handsome in their way, the women narrow-shouldered and undersized, and both alike, on this extreme edge of Normandy, with more of the intent and passionate Breton than of the buxom Norman in their countenances. The condition of these poor people became a living care to Margaret, even as to her saintly mother-in-law; but actual contact with them was difficult. These streets were no place for a delicate Princess. Pools of blood from the slaughter-houses stagnated the whole week long in the hollows of the worn pavement of the Rue de l'Hospice; torrents of unmentionable garbage streamed down the gutter of the Rue du Jeudi. And yet in the winter there was no other exercise, when the park, near the Sarthe, became damp and swampy, when the royal roads to Séez and Le Mans and Paris became for months impassable to the light litter of the Duchess. Often Margaret was condemned to stay at home, idly glancing from her window across the pretty, rolling country, softly wooded as the South of England, with here and there a spire among the trees, here

and there a nestling farm, and on a distant hill a grey steep-streeted village.

In this placid view three features alone provoked attention. The first, a great cone-like rock with a ruined fortress on the summit, known as La Butte de Chaumont; the second, the lake and woods of Rablais; the third, the Castle of Lonray. It was the third which became remarkable to our heroine. The Castle of Lonray was still in those days a strong old fortress, with huge towers standing, strong enough to defend the city of Alençon, while a great part of the dwelling-house had fallen into ruins. Three or four years later, the castle was rebuilt in the charming early style of the sixteenth century, Italianate, but not yet conventional, with arcades of columns along the cheerful front. But when first Margaret dwelt in Alençon, the castle was still a ruined mediæval fortress; and behind those grim and ancient towers dwelt a beautiful woman (the more beautiful for her gloomy setting), a distant cousin of the Duke of Alençon's, Madame Aimée Motier de la Fayette, known all about Alençon as La Dame de Lonray.

Madame de Lonray was a young widow, of a romantic, tender, and rather timid disposition, and fond of pleasure, fond of admiration, beautiful, and much about the Court; yet, notwithstanding the stories of Brantôme and the dangerous devotion of the Count of Angoulême, in the main a virtuous woman. She became a great and constant friend of Margaret's—a friend for life, associated with all her joys and sorrows. A little later she married Jacques de Silly, Bailli de Caen; and as *la baillive de Caen* she flits across the pages of Margaret's letters and the pages of Brantôme.

But when Margaret first dwelt in Alençon, she was still in her weeds for the Bastard of Navarre, still a young widow, and only known by her title of La Dame de Lonray. M. Franck, with admirable acumen, has perceived the value of this fact, and bids us behold in the widow of Lonray (or Longray), *Longarine*, the charming young widow of the "Heptameron" widowed again, when Margaret wrote her novels. So clear is the evidence that I withdraw my former preference for Philiberte de Savoie, and agree with my superior critic in bidding the reader seek in the Baillive de Caen the original of *Longarine*.

Suddenly the quiet life of these ladies in the country was interrupted by an event of immense importance. In the autumn of the year 1515 King Louis died. Francis of Angoulême, the brother of the young Duchess, ascended the throne as Francis I.; and for many years his sister forewent her life of quiet provincial dignity to be the brilliant Egeria of the gayest Court in Europe.

## III.

## 1522.

Six years of continual festivity diverted that splendid Court, exhausted the treasury, and all but ruined the country. The Field of the Cloth of Gold ended in rumours of famine and of warfare. No need to tell the reader here of the old rivalry of Burgundy and Orleans, fatally revived in Charles V. and Francis I., or of the causes that led to war between them; no need to depict the growing power, and the growing discontent of the Constable de Bourbon, nor the rashness of Francis

in taking from him the generalship of the army to bestow it on Alençon. Suffice it to say that, in the year 1523, many tumid evils gathered to a head at once, and the rebellion of Bourbon, the war with the Emperor Charles, and the outbreak of the French Reformation burst together on the startled country.

The castle of Alençon was changed and desolate. Last year the Dowager Duchess had retired into her convent of the Sisters of St Clare; and her delicate frame, worn with prayer and fasting, with the energies and the austerities of a saintly life, succumbed in a few months to the rule that she had chosen. In that same year of 1521 she died, amid the lamentations of her people. That winter there was a great famine, there was no bread to be bought in Normandy. Many sickened, many died. The tomb of the dead Duchess was surrounded by kneeling and weeping supplicants, calling upon her to listen from her place in Heaven. She heard, as they believed. Miracles were worked at her tomb; the stone figure with the folded hands and quiet lids was not less quick to pity than the living saint had been; and the legend of Saint Margaret grew and prospered in the country side.

This contagion of pathos, of religion, affected the younger Duchess. She also was unhappy. For the first time in her life she was confronted with the tragedy of existence. War was declared; and Francis had given the Constableship of the army to Alençon, and Margaret distrusted the shallow mediocrity of her husband. If he should fail! If the King should be defeated! The struggle was arduous—no mere invasion of a weaker country as in 1515, but battle face to face with

the great forces of Europe, with the Emperor, with revolted France, perhaps with England.

In this hour of apprehension Margaret yearned for celestial consolations. She wrote in the trouble of her soul to Guillaume Briçonnet, Count of Montbrun, the far-famed Bishop of Meaux, son of the great statesman who befriended Savonarola. His answer brought her sympathy, and, as she fancied, help and guidance. When, in the winter of 1522, the King, Alençon, and Silly, husband of Longarine, and Vendôme, husband of Françoise, with almost every man at Court, down to the little poet Clément Marot, had all departed south with the army, Margaret left her desolate castle of Alençon, and removed to Meaux, in order to be near her kind religious friend. In that mystical and pious circle we must now imagine *Parlamente* and *Longarine* discussing the Scriptures with the priests and scholars of the little episcopal city, reading St Paul where they used to read Le Roman de la Rose or Les Cent Nouvelles Nouvelles, and forgetting the language of the Court for the strange metaphorical jargon preserved in the letters of Briçonnet to the Duchess of Alençon.

These two ladies were not alone in their palace. Madame de Vendôme (as I think from a passage in Margaret's correspondence), with several personages from the Court of Alençon, attended their migration. Among these we shall be chiefly interested in a charming young ecclesiastic, at that time barely twenty years of age. He was the natural son of Chancellor Duprat, and in Margaret's letters we often find him mentioned as Monsieur de Juilly. In 1522 he was, however, still unpreferred to this abbacy, and as plain Nicolas Dangu

he walked the streets of Meaux, and cultivated the friendship of the Bishop. Despite the difference of age, these two were companions by spirit and by nature; for Briçonnet himself was not more mystical than Dangu, "ever dreaming" (as *Simontault* declared), "the republic of Plato." Nicholas Dangu was a person of a singular and delicate character, instinct with devotion, constancy, and a melancholy goodness. Even at Court he never spoke ill of women, and would rather have died than turn them into the occasion of a foolish jest. Indeed, his affectionate and Platonic friendship for the lively and enthusiastic young Duchess of Alençon dignified all womanhood in his eyes. There is in the "Heptameron" no other character so engaging and so loveable as this young man whom the incomparable M. Franck has divined to be the original of *Dagoucin*, the honest and devoted servitor of Parlamente.

But at Meaux, in 1522, we must not observe only *Dagoucin* and *Parlamente* and *Longarine*. A more important character was mistress of the Court. This was the mother of Margaret and of the King, Louise of Savoy, Countess of Angoulême, Regent of the kingdom in the absence of Francis. "Madame" was more feared than any monarch. She was a commanding woman, a woman of ambition and ability, a woman also capable of the most passionate devotion to the few she loved: yet, in the general opinion, a terrible, rather than a loveable woman. "Anzi una Donna terribilissima!" declared De Lussy four or five years later to Eleanor of Austria, "and one who can treat a daughter-in-law worse than any kitchen wench." She was a worthy daughter of that passionate Philip of Savoy, who slew with his own hand one of his father's counsellors, and very nearly

drowned another. Vehement, quarrelsome, ambitious, this daughter of Savoy and Bourbon was equal to her race. But Margaret was one of the two persons living to whom Madame was tender and devoted; and Margaret beheld her mother in an ideal light.

Madame had come to Meaux in order to be with her daughter; and once arrived, this woman, a few years later so distinguished as a persecutor of heretics, found herself involved in the nebulous piety of the place. Margaret had conceived the idea of bringing over the Royal Family to the New Ideas: her sister-in-law was her first convert (was it Queen Claude or Madame de Vendôme?). She quaintly hoped that her second convert was her mother. "Madame has begun to read in the Holy Scriptures!" she writes exultingly. "The King and Madame," she writes again, "are quite decided to let it be made known that the truth of God is no heresy." Lefèbvre sent the illustrious convert a copy of the Epistles of St Paul, and all the semi-Lutheran mystics of Meaux rejoiced over the serious devotion of Louise. But Madame, though tolerant of an entertaining variant on orthodox opinion, was the last woman alive to sanction Protestantism as an agent, as a factor. As soon as the Lutherans became an organised and dogmatic opposition to the Papal authority, Madame withdrew her clement interest in their beliefs, and announced herself their most determined enemy. She feared that the man who questioned the Divine Right of Popes might next begin to argue and protest against the Right of Kings. But Margaret, writing the "Heptameron" long after that cherished mother's death, appears to have remembered her under this dearest and most sympathetic aspect; to have remembered her only as the pious and kindly

evangelical of Meaux. I suppose there is no doubt that *Dame Oysile*, the virtuous widow of the "Heptameron," is Margaret's portrait of her mother. *Oysile*, *Loyise*, the names are identical, and M. M. Franck, Le Roux de Lincy, Génin, and La Croix are all of this opinion. And yet there is something so grimly humorous in this rendering of the passionate, arrogant, vindictive Louisa of Savoy, that I have wondered whether in this portrait Margaret did not rather mean to draw her virtuous governess, Madame de Châtillon, or even, perhaps, to set a picture of herself in her maturer years in contrast to *Parlamente*, that vivacious likeness of her youth. Still, given the idealizing temper of Margaret, and the weight of the authority against me, I own it to be quite probable that in the benignant and religious *Oysile*, we should behold her memory of (*la donna terribilissima*) her mother, although in my own mind *Oysile* appears a fairly accurate representation of the Margaret of 1540.

We may imagine that, had she lived to know *Madame Oysile*, Madame Louise would have shared our views as to the value of the likeness to herself. The phase of pietism and scriptural allusion was very short with her. "Thank God," she wrote in her diary for December 1522, "Thank God, my son and I began to recognise the hypocrites, white, black, grey, smoke-coloured, and of every hue from which God in His infinite clemency has seen fit to preserve us." It is in these terms that Madame alludes to her mystical neighbours of Meaux, among whom, in coming years, she was to scatter death and exile, captivity and punishment, with no parsimonious hand.

## IV.

## 1524-30.

The quiet winter spent at Meaux was succeeded by the most eventful years of Margaret's life. Francis, having driven back the invaders of Provence, and crushed the rebellion of the nobles who assisted Bourbon, determined on invading Italy, and insisting on his claim to Milan. Francis was himself the great-grandson, as his dying wife was the great-granddaughter, of Valentine of Milan; and their double claim to the Duchy had been recognised by the Emperor in the Investiture of Milan, bestowed on the father-in-law of Francis in 1509. To recapture Milan would be a fine revenge on the Emperor for the armies he had brought to the aid of Bourbon. But it was not the Emperor who suffered. On the 24th of February 1525 Francis himself was taken captive at Pavia; Montmorency, Chabot, the young King of Navarre, and many others shared his dismal lot, while many more were slain, among them Bonnivet, in whom M. Franck beholds the original of *Saffredent*, and François de Silly, the second husband of La Dame De Lonray. The capture of the King was attributed by some to the cowardice, by others to the incapacity of the Duke of Alençon, who had failed to bring the vanguard to the relief of the King. Alençon in this was more unfortunate than blameworthy; impeded by the enemy, he *could* not advance in time. Nevertheless he became the scapegoat of the misery and wounded pride of France, which beheld in him not only the cause of the disaster, but the only conspicuous noble of the kingdom

neither dead, nor wounded, nor in prison. The people sang songs to his dishonour in all the fields and alleys, and Rabelais wrote his bitter phrase concerning "*les fuyards de Pavie.*" By the time the retreating troops arrived at Lyons, the unhappy Duke was ill with despair and remorse. At first, Margaret would not see him. But when she learned how seriously the poor, defeated general took his disgrace to heart, how he was actually dying of shame and sorrow, his wife almost forgave him the captivity of her brother. It was not for long that she had to exert her magnanimity. On the 11th of April, the Duke was dead; Margaret was now a childless widow, and the line of St Louis was extinct in the Duchy of Alençon.

In the later summer Margaret went to Spain to negotiate the release of her brother; and here we find the lively *Parlamente* (the wittiest of Court ladies, the dreamiest of mystics) as the most practical and persevering of politicians. Margaret went to Spain to release her brother, but also to instruct him in the latest details of a great Guelf League which the audacious mind of Wolsey projected against the Emperor; for Charles had grievously offended his allies of England by marrying a princess of Portugal while he was betrothed to the daughter of Henry VIII. Wolsey found willing allies in Italy, since all the chief Italian States were dismayed at the supremacy given to the Emperor by the victory of Pavia. He found it an easy task to detach the Pope from the Emperor, and easier still to secure the delighted adhesion of defeated France. Italy, France, and England were to be joined by the little kingdom of Navarre, whose youthful sovereign the allies then meant to marry to Madame

Renée, the orphan daughter of King Louis XII., a girl of fifteen years of age. It was expected that Scotland and perhaps Flanders would give in their adherence to the cause. With the materials for so immense a resistance to the Emperor, it was necessary that Francis should be warned against granting too abject conditions for his release. "The King's sister," writes Orio in London to the Doge, "is to go to Spain. D'Aubigny, the brother-in-law of the Chancellor of Alençon, tells me that Madame is sending the Duchess Margaret to Spain to tell the Most Christian King *not* to make terms with the Emperor, as the King of England will aid his release, and Madame intends sending troops into Italy and an ambassador to Venice."[1]

The failure of the Guelf League, through the jealousies and exactions of Venice and the Pope, may be read in the Calendars of Rawdon Brown, the Diplomatic Negotiations of Desjardins, and our English State papers for the reign of Henry VIII. The seven MSS. volumes of Du Bellay's Letters and Memoranda, preserved in the National Library at Paris, throw a fuller light on the subject, and help us to understand the gradual transmutation of that which began as a Guelf and Papal League, into a vast Latitudinarian Confederation of Turkey, Hungary, Saxony, Flanders, Venice, England, Switzerland, and France against the Emperor. Nothing shows more clearly how the real essence of the Guelf spirit was not attachment to the Pope, but devotion to the cause of national independence and hostility to the foreign Emperor. Yet for a while Wolsey, Du Bellay, and the sanguine Margaret believed,

[1] *Rawdon Brown*, "Venetian Calendars," vol. iii., p. 1111. London, 10th September 1525.

as later on Italian Liberals believed of Pio Nono, that the Pope would continue to place himself at the head of the national movement, even after the extinction of its exclusively religious phase. How they were deceived in this hope, and how France and England were at last estranged by the unfortunate friendship of the King of Scotland, may be studied in the volumes mentioned above, as also in the first volume of the Archives of Simancas. The subject is too vast for the limits of so slight a page as this; yet it was necessary to mention it, since it is for her influence in this most subtle and most complex of all the movements of the complex and subtle sixteenth century, that Margaret of Angoulême will continue to be remembered as a person of historic moment.

After a year and a month of captivity, King Francis was released (though not directly by his sister's efforts, nor yet by the action of the Italian League), and in his stead his two elder sons were sent as hostages into Spain. This was not the only fetter that bound Francis to the hated country of his captivity. It was in vain that he arranged with Henry VIII. to marry the little Princess Mary; he had not been permitted to quit his dungeon until his hand was given to the Emperor's sisters. Nor was this the only marriage which contravened the original plan of the League. I have said that it had been decided to wed Renée of France to Henry of Navarre. The intended bridegroom was an impetuous, brave, ambitious youth, at that time surrounded by an adventitious romance, on account of his spirited escape from his dungeon in the fortress at Pavia. As late as the second of July 1526, we hear from Suardino at Granada that the marriage

of Henri d'Albret to Renée is spoken of as a settled engagement. But Henri d'Albret, practical, intelligent, rather sensual, and sometimes even brutal, had nothing in common with the orphan of sixteen. He found more companionship in the society of an experienced woman of the world, older than himself, able to push his interests, witty and distinguished if without the charm of youth, and sharing his convictions in politics and religion. In July, as I have said, we still hear of Henri's marriage with Renée. On the 24th of January 1527, he espoused the King's sister and our heroine, Margaret of Angoulême, the widowed Duchess of Alençon.

Margaret was eleven years older than her husband, and it was not long before occasional discords marred the union of this devoted woman with the volatile and sensual husband of her choice. Most of these dissensions may be traced to the fact that Margaret would never allow her husband to consult his own interests before the interests of Francis I. Descurra,[1] the Spanish Ambassador, draws a lively picture of the behaviour of Henri upon such occasions—anger, sarcasm, bitter reproaches, rained on the head of the offending wife, who would bend and weep, and on the next occasion offer up to her idolized brother the State secrets of Navarre. "Bonne mais trop faible princesse!" ejaculates Florimond de Rémond; and, indeed, the fact that she was morally too good for him, could only add a point to her husband's just resentment of her weakness. Inconstant, violent, brutally facetious as he was, Henri d'Albret was a good, a public-spirited, and an ambitious monarch; and the sisterly devotion of

[1] Le Baron de Ruble; Le mariage de Jeanne d'Albret; and Arch. Nat., Paris, K. 1492, 14.

his elderly wife ruined his dearest plans and baulked his bravest enterprise. He was an affectionate father, and Margaret's brother took his child away from him. He was, with all his faults, not devoid of a real tenderness and generosity, and those who love the memory of Françoise de Rohan will love him a little for his salvation of her. The man was a kindly and natural specimen of the average sensual man, and as such his wife has left a not unsympathetic picture of him in the "Heptameron." It is again M. Franck who has set right the error which beheld in the husband of Parlamente the mediocre Duke of Alençon. No, it is clear that Henri of Navarre is the original of that swaggering *Hircan*, with his rough and rustic gallantry, his quick wit, his ready jeers at the bonds of marriage. Yet *Hircan* is represented as entertaining a certain tolerant and cynical veneration for his wife. This is the man! Henri —or as his subjects called him, *Hauric*—is a name identical with *Hircan*. And if the anagram can force us to accept the kindly Oysile for the terrible Loyise, how much more convincing is it in the case of the facetious and material Henri of Navarre!

To this man was Margaret now married, and to his interests in some degree she must conform. For three years after their wedding the King and Queen of Navarre dwelt in France, and Margaret gave all her energies to the conduct of the Liberal League. But in 1530 Henri declined to remain any longer an exile from his tiny kingdom. He had waited long enough, hoping that his brother-in-law would extort from Spain the restitution of the Spanish Navarrese. But Francis did nothing; and at length, declining any longer to dance

attendance in a foreign Court, Henri carried his brilliant wife to rule a little Court of her own in French Navarre.

IV.

1530-40.

Margaret had been to Pau once before, immediately after her marriage. She had found an ancient fortress-castle dominating a picturesque and still half-savage region. "I have been here five days," she wrote in October 1527, "and as yet I scarce begin to understand the language." It was a sharp foreign mountain country that should become her home—a desolate southern kingdom, with tracts of arid sand under the cypresses, with orchards of grey olives and forests of cork-oak, with white serrated Pyrenean ridges pale against the horizon: ridges full of robbers then, and full of bears and wolves, peopled by poor and swarthy peasants ignorant of the arts of France.

Such a place is to the modern mind as attractive as the glades of Fontainebleau, but it was opposed to the civilized ideal of the Renaissance; it had little of that "sweet civility and gracious worldliness" which Brantôme wrote to praise. Margaret took care to have it changed before she made the place her residence. At Nérac in the north, and in the south at Pau, the Italian architects were busy.

"Qui n'a vist Castel de Päu
Jamey ne vist a rey de täu'!"

cried the enchanted peasants of the south, as terrace on terrace arose below the castle, forming, perhaps, the loveliest gardens of those days; as round the enlarged

and airy windows of the altered palace fanciful arabesques were wrought by deft Italian fingers, and wide halls succeeded to the narrow mediæval chambers. Thus it was to a cheerful and modern home—a royal house, and eminently splendid—that Margaret and her husband returned in 1530. They had left their child behind them at Alençon, in the kind custody of Madame de Lonray. Francis, ever suspicious of his brother-in-law, did not desire that his niece should live at home upon the Spanish border. The King of France hoped to keep Navarre as a friendly neutral between himself and the Pyrenees; yet, since he did nothing to content the ambition of Henri d'Albret, he continually dreaded a reconciliation between Navarre and Spain. A marriage between Jeanne d'Albret and a Spanish prince was, during the twenty years of her maidenhood, the secret dream of her father, the secret dread of France. In 1530 the little girl was only two years old. Yet she remained apart from her parents in Alençon, which Duchy, lapsing to the crown on the death of the Duke, had been generously granted to Margaret by her brother for so long as she should live. And sometimes in the castle there, and sometimes in the sunny manor-house of Lonray, the little Princess of Navarre prospered amid the lush woods and biting winds of Normandy, and grew a beautiful and rosy child.

Meanwhile Margaret, deprived of her offspring, filled her Court with young creatures, and loved to make them happy. In France she had cared for her motherless nephews and nieces; in Navarre she took to her loving heart the young orphan sister of her husband, and the three orphan children of her cousin the Vicomte de Rohan, killed at Pavia. There was a girl Jacqueline,

and two boys René and Claude. With the eldest of the sons of Rohan, and with the girlish sister of Henri d'Albret, we are not unconcerned ; for in them I believe we behold the originals of the *Saffredent* and the *Nomerfide*, whose madcap and frolic youth enlivens the "Heptameron." It is true that I am quite unsupported in this conclusion, which I offer to the reader merely as the unauthorised suggestion of an amateur. In *Nomerfide* M. La Croix detects the features of Madame de Châteaubriand, the beautiful mistress of Francis before his captivity in Spain. But Françoise de Chateaubriand (besides the fact that hers was no pleasant memory with which to regale an unkind and fickle lover) was older than Margaret herself; whereas *Nomerfide* is a harum-scarum girl, "the youngest—shall I say the maddest?—of us all," as Parlamente observes. As to identity, M. le Roux de Lincy offers no suggestion, and M. Montaiglon is a sharer in his silence. M. Franck, faithful to his theory of anagrams, discovers in *Nomerfide* the word *Fimarcon*, which is the name of a fief belonging to Madame de Montpézat. I must confess this strikes me as riding the willing horse to death. *Nomerfide* is not the anagram of Fimarcon, for two letters in the first and two in the second word remain non-interchanged. Moreover, this is carrying to a dangerous length the derivation of names from fiefs. If we accept the owner of Fimarcon for the original of *Nomerfide*, why should we not accept the owner of the fief of Dangu for the original of Dagoucin? Now, Montmorency, the severe, the bigot, was the owner of the fief of Dangu, a being as unlike the gentle Dagoucin, as the mild Abbé of Juilly is his living likeness. Those personages in the "Heptameron" of whose identity we

are the most convinced derive their pseudonyms from their Christian names, like Louise, Hanric, and Nicolas Dangu; from their qualities, like *Parlamente*, the talkative Liberal, or *Ennasuicte*, the maid of honour (Anne-à-suite), fully as often as from their territorial possessions as in the case of Madame de Lonray. An imperfect anagram with the name of a fief belonging to the wife of Montpézat, does not strike me as sufficient evidence of her identity with Nomerfide. And yet I have no clever explanation of the name to offer, for I must confess my ignorance as to the names of many of the fiefs in the possession of Isabeau d'Albret—"ceste fine mouche"—and my private hypothesis is that this strange name is probably an allusion to the fickleness, recklessness, and delightful folly of this madcap girl, whose "petit ris follastre" still rings through Marot's clear crystalline verses. "*No me fide = non m'y fie*," is probably some playful thrust in the half-French half-Spanish language of her home at the charming changeable creature who seemed to justify the line of Margaret's brother:—

> "Souvent femme varie,
> Bien fol qui s'y fie."

But let us leave the name of *Nomerfide;* the character remains. And who is more like Isabeau than this gay fantastic *Nomerfide?* An airy little tuft of thistle down, she drifts across the pages of the "Heptameron," as Isabeau across the letters of Margaret and the poems of Clément Marot. Light-hearted, feather-headed, impertinent, she laughs at each and all; her stories all are "court et joyeulx;" and she herself a creature of madcap banter. The person of all the

company with whom we find her most at home, is not *Saffredent* (her lover, or as M. Franck believes, her husband), but, as M. Franck observes, it is obviously Hircan, whom she pleasantly rallies and mocks with infantile familiarity, oblivious of his superior rank. Indeed, it is plain that *Nomerfide* and *Saffredent* are themselves personages of consequence, superior, for example, to *Ennasuitte* or *Simontault*. Now *Hircan* was the elder brother of Isabeau d' Albret. And this, reader, is the end of my argument. Choose which you will, the middle-aged and faded Court beauty of M. Lacroix, or the respectable official's wife of M. Franck. In my fancy, none the less, the laughing *Nomerfide* assumes the charming girlish form, the free madcap manners, the large eyes and white throat of the frolic Isabeau d'Albret.

I shall take less time to discuss the original of *Saffredent*, a merry young gentleman with hair beginning to grizzle, notwithstanding his green years. None of his stories are older than 1529, at which date, if you remember, the young Rohans came to live with Margaret in Navarre. M. Franck, convinced that *Saffredent* is the husband of Nomerfide, has fastened on M. de Montpézat the character of this "jeune gentilhomme chargé de divertir la compagnie;" while Le Roux de Lincy gives the original to Bonnivet, dead nearly twenty years before the "Heptameron" was written. Neither of these gentlemen suggest any origin for the name, and though there is, as always, much plausibility in the suggestion of M. Franck—for Montpézat was a merry middle-aged gentleman, a constant companion of Margaret's, and an admirer of ladies (do we not hear of him at the Field of the Cloth of Gold as the sweet-

heart of Anne Brown, the handsomest woman in England or in France?)—still Montpézat appears to me a dozen years, at least, too old for *Saffredent*. As to the name I will venture to remark that *Saffredent* is obviously Safre-dent, greedy-tooth or sweet-tooth, as we say in English. What more natural than that Margaret should disguise by some such nickname the boy she had brought up as her own son? It is also noteworthy that in obselete and popular French, the word *Safranier* denotes (Heaven knows why!) a ruined man, a bankrupt, or a broken merchant. Now the husband of Isabeau d'Albret was that young Vicomte de Rohan, ruined by his own extravagance and the treachery of his servants, who lived to become the poorest gentleman in France, whom Margaret barely rescued from absolute bankruptcy, and whose debts, whose gaiety, and whose disasters furnished the gossip of many a bygone year.

Enough of *Saffredent* and *Nomerfide*—bright, vivacious, ephemeral phantasms! To me, reader, there is a tinge of melancholy in their gaiety. For these impoverished and careless creatures lived to grow old like any others—lived to become the grandparents of Françoise de Rohan, the nobler, more unhappy, and more tender Julie of sixteenth century reality.

At the Court of Pau, while *Parlamente* and *Hircan*, *Nomerfide* and *Saffredent*, *Dagoucin* and *Longarine*, roam the gardened terraces, a young lady of five or six and twenty keeps close to the others, making sweet eyes at Saffredent. She is sentimental, and waxes eloquent upon the misery of unrequited love, but with all her sentiment her tongue is freer than that of any other in the company, and we who have chosen four of

*Nomerfide's* narrations are compelled to choose but one of *Ennasuitte's*. She thinks herself beloved by *Saffredent*, though, as we know, all his vows are really for another of the company; for he, like *Dagoucin* and *Simontault*, pays court to *Parlamente*. And yet *Ennasuitte* is married, nay, she is a mother; and what is more, and very natural, she is the mother of Brantôme —"Ma mêre," as he informs us, "ma mêre, qui estoit à la Reine de Navarre et qui en sçavoit quelques secrets de ses Nouvelles, *et qu' elle en estoit une des devisantes*." M. Le Roux de Lincy was the first to perceive the identity of this character with Anne de Vivonne, Anne-à-suicte, as the punning anagram proclaims her, the wife of François de Bourdeilles. This worthy editor has been followed in this respect by all others of repute; and the question of the original of *Ennasuitte* is one that in all probability will not be raised again.

Two other characters complete the company: *Géburon*, in whom M. Franck has discovered a certain M. de Burye, an ancient friend of Margaret's, suspected of Protestantism, as his cousin Brantôme assures us. *Géburon* is an old gentleman, whose frequent "vous me faictes souvenir" refers to a more ancient and a wider past than his young companions can recall. He has invaded Italy with Charles, with Louis, and with Francis; he has known the life of courts and camps for more than fifty years, and now with a smile at his own reputation, he exhorts his companions to virtue. One of those who least believe in his persuasions is *Simontault*, once the devoted servitor of Parlamente; now growing old, not, however, less gallant or less sceptical for that. "Quand vous parlez de la conscience, vous me faictes rire!" he cries. He also has fought

in Italy, and he has witnessed the Cloth of Gold. Less in rank than the others, neat, merry, quick at half-sentimental badinage, I had imagined this clever fellow, "a little sore at his jester's reputation," to be no less a personage than Margaret's valet de chambre, Clément Marot. Leroux had oddly fancied him as Henry of Navarre; Franck defines him as François de Bourdeilles, Seigneur de Montauris, a man whom Brantôme, his son, described as "homme scabreux, haut à main," familiar with popes, and kings, and nobles. *Simontault* may be perchance the husband of *Ennasuitte;* although, like M. de Montaiglon, I think it strange that Brantôme 'ce vantard' should have kept this piece of knowledge to himself, and this figure does not appear to me to have received its final interpretation. We will, however, admit him here as François de Bourdeilles. And now, ancient and pious widow, pretty and worldly one, *Oysile* and *Parlamente*, facetious *Hircan*, madcap *Nomerfide*, gay *Saffredent*, and *Dagoucin* the unworldly Platonist, and *Géburon* the feeble old soldier, *Simontault* with his jests and amused inferiority, and Rabelaisian *Ennasuitte*, they all have passed before us.

## VI.

### 1540-1544.

I am wrong, gentle reader, if I have allowed you for a moment to imagine that the Queen of Navarre spent her life at Pau and Nérac, ruling her little kingdom, and telling stories among her intimate companions. These sojourns in her own palace were her rarest holidays, for Margaret was too good a sister to

be a perfect wife. In her mind the requirements of King Francis were imperative, and she spent her life inspecting his frontiers and raising his troops in time of war, or in negotiating the English alliance for him in time of peace. In our collections of foreign State Papers her name occurs, at least, as often as the King's; and the Englishmen, Paget and Wallup, and the Venetian Matteo Dandolo, declare her service in the Liberal cause. "She is ever a member of the King's Secret Council," wrote the last, "and therefore she is obliged to follow the King of France wherever he goes, though narrow and inconvenient be her lodgings." "She was busy with great occupations," affirmed Brantôme, "even when she seemed to have retired."

Nor were all the holidays of Margaret passed in the leisure of her husband's Court. Sometimes when she could snatch a moment of freedom, she dedicated it to *Nomerfide* and *Saffredent*, bankrupt upon their great estate in Brittany; sometimes she carried their child Françoise to visit her own little daughter Jeanne, at Longray or at Plessis, laughing at the tyranny which the little Princess of Navarre exercised over her gentle playmate, nor sparing "de bonnes corrections manuelles" when the two little girls became too noisy in their play. Until the summer of 1537, Jeanne had lived with Mme. de Lonray at Alençon, where she kept in the castle-yard the first turkeys in France among her poultry, and where she ran so wild in the great wooded park that her apple cheeks aroused the merriment of her old Latin master, Nicholas de Bourbon, though this worthy humourist found in his *Rubella* a pupil as apt in turning a Latin epigram as in any sport or pastime out of doors.

But in the June of 1537, Francis, suspecting some negotiation of Henri d'Albret's to wed the little girl to the infant of Spain, ordered her removal from her mother's castle of Alençon to the gloomy Palace of Plessiz-les-Tours, a French castle, where Jeanne was educated at the royal cost and as a French princess. This was bitter to Henri d'Albret; he felt no gratitude to his brother-in-law for providing a French prison for his daughter free of charge; and though she had been as distant from him at Alençon, and though her old household and her governess accompanied her to Plessis, still the thought rankled that the heiress of Navarre was in fact a hostage in the hands of France.

We imagine that he did not desist from that secret plan of marrying her to Spain. At least the suspicions of Francis were not dispelled. Suddenly, in 1441, the King of France announced his intention of marrying his twelve-year-old niece to William, Duke of Cleves, and by this move Francis hoped at once to defy and aggravate the Emperor (the enemy of Cleves), and to secure himself against a Spanish match for the heiress of Navarre. It was undoubtedly a clever move, but it carried consternation into Jeanne's dominions. The Estas of Béarn more than once appealed against this peremptory edict of a foreign king, which would secure the poor half-confiscated little kingdom neither against France nor against Spain, and would make the future sovereign an absentee, living on her husband's German territory. It was all in vain; and all in vain Henri d'Albret resented this imperious interference in his own affairs, while Margaret vacillated between sympathy with her husband and devotion to her brother. In front of the angry despair of Henri, the vehement

misery of her little daughter, Margaret appears, in softer moments, to have regretted the holocaust her brother bade her offer up. She promised d'Albret, as Descurra informed the Court at Madrid, that she would do her best to make the marriage merely a betrothal. "We can betroth her to Cleves, and marry her in three or four years' time to Orleans!" (This scheme appears to have succeeded the plan of the Spanish Infante—perhaps it was Margaret's loyal substitution for it.) But Henri d'Albret would not be appeased by dreams and promises. "What's the use?" Descurra reports him to have cried. "Que aprovedia que se haga eso; y despues vos avisareis, come habeis acostumbrado?" "What's the use of arranging it so, when you will let out the whole matter, as you always do!" Margaret asseverated with tears and protests that, for this one occasion, she would prove no tell-tale. "If you do," burst out Hircan, with a savage snarl, "in that case I promise you as miserable an old age as any woman ever had!" Thereupon Margaret despatched a secret agent to Plessis, instructing Jeanne and Longarine to protest inflexibly against the marriage.

But a few more weeks, a frown of her brother's, a perception that this sacrifice of Jeanne and of Navarre would be pleasant in his nostrils, and Margaret had changed. That momentary relenting had vanished and had left her hard, with the hardness of the martyr whom temptation has nearly vanquished once. "I would rather have seen my daughter die, as she told us she should do, than I would have stayed her from going to the place where I deemed she could do you a service;" so wrote Margaret to her brother, despite her knowledge of the misery this match would make. She had no pity

on the strange, proud little girl whose mother would not, whose father dared not, help her, and who, beaten and coerced, still declared in her weak childish treble that she would never love the Duke of Cleves. Or was it perhaps the sternness of agonized pity and maternal fear, for Margaret earnestly feared the disgrace of Jeanne, and the displeasure of her uncle. There had been a terrible scene in May, when the brave child had dared to do for herself what no one ventured to do for her. "I had rather throw myself down a well, than marry the Duke of Cleves," she had declared to Francis. The King had been furious, and turning to *Longarine*, he had cried in a terrible voice—"Ha, Madame, I know you. I recognize you here! You have taught your lesson well. But 'tis no use! I tell you, *the cutting off of heads shall come of it!*" Wild with terror, the timid widow had faltered, as Descurra tells us, a pacifying apology. But the King would not listen. "Enough, enough," he cried. "This is your teaching! She *shall* marry the Duke of Cleves!"

*Longarine* and *Parlamente*, familiar with the dreadful consequences of a monarch's anger, had cowered and trembled. It was clear the little girl must marry the unwelcome bridegroom. "The Queen, my mother, has threatened me," writes Jeanne in her protestation, "and she has had me whipt by my governess, the Baillive de Caen (*Longarine*), and several times my governess has exhorted me by the command of the Queen, my mother, threatening me that should I not do, in the matter of this marriage, all that the King of France requires, I shall be so flogged and maltreated, that I shall die of it, and that also I shall be the cause of the ruin and destruction of my father, my mother, and all their house.

And all this has put me in such fear—especially the destruction of my said father and mother—that I know of no one who can succour me but God, seeing that my father and my mother have forsaken me, and these know well what I have said to them—that I can never love the Duke of Cleves, and that I will none of him." Heavy pressure, indeed, was put upon this child of twelve. Can this be Parlamente striking her tender child, who speaks so eloquently and so sentimentally on perfect love in the "Heptameron"? Can this be Margaret, disregarding prayers and tears, who pleads so earnestly with her brother for Mademoiselle Destouteville in a similar case? "You may say what you will," cries Oisille in the "Heptameron," "none the less must parental authority be recognised; for if people married at pleasure, what unhappy marriages would there not be! Is it to be expected that a young man and a girl from twelve to fifteen years of age can understand what is really their good? And, if you consider, those who have married for love, come off far worse, as a rule, than those who are married by force . . . . for a forced marriage is generally made by those who have more judgment and experience than those whom it chiefly concerns."

Now (*pace* Messrs Génin, Leroux, Franck, Lacroix, and Montaiglon), it is nearly always Oisille, and not Parlamente, who is Margaret's stalking horse in the "Heptameron;" and I have no doubt that these were the real sentiments of La Mal-mariée, the unhappy wife of Henry d'Albret. She had been married by force, and she had been a little dull. She had married for love, and, as the King, her nephew, lived to say, "Never were a couple less united! There is no love lost between my aunt and her husband!" Doubtless, in forcing her

marriage to a distasteful bridegroom, Queen Margaret intended no unkindness towards her little daughter.

But Jeanne was a determined and valiant little creature. Under her exterior of a charming sprightly brunette, she concealed immense resolution. She suffered the beatings, she suffered the scoldings, but they did not change her mind. Once at Plessiz, and once again at Alençon, on the very eve of her marriage, she called her household round her and bade them sign and witness a solemn protestation: "I, Jeanne of Navarre, say, and declare, and protest again before these present, that the marriage to be made between me and the Duke of Cleves is against my will, that I never consented to it, and never will consent, . . . . and he shall never be my husband, and never will I hold him for such, and the said marriage shall be null. And I call God and you to witness that you sign with me my protestation, and recognise the force and violence and constraint which is used towards me in the matter of this marriage."

It is difficult to say how much Margaret knew, if anything, of these solemn declarations—the name of Longarine, Margaret's confidant and friend, is conspicuously absent from either deed. But Margaret did obtain the grace of a purely formal marriage. And when two years later the Duke of Cleves joined the party of the Emperor, the bonds of this unwilling marriage were dissolved, and little Jeanne, happy and brilliant, was released from Plessiz to shine and spend and make merry at her uncle's Court in Paris, with a zest of enjoyment and extravagance that caused her pinched and anxious mother many careful hours.

## VII.

### 1541-1544.

When the marriage of Jeanne was over, and the autumn rains had come, the long anxiety and the unhealthy season told upon the nerves of Margaret and her husband, and they agreed to quit their capital of Pau to pass the month of September at the baths of Cauterets in the Pyrenees. "'Tis at that season," as Margaret informs us, "that the Pyrenean springs are in their fullest virtue, and to the baths of Cauterets there resort many visitors from Spain, France, and other countries; some to drink the waters, others to bathe in them, and others again to take the mud bath. And so marvellous is the effect of these waters that many return in perfect health from Cauterets who had been given up for lost by their physicians."

Cauterets is a pretty place, and, in those times, it was a very simple one. The great folk from France and Spain dwelt in the little cottages that dotted the shady pastures. Torrents and rivulets rush and gurgle down the rocky country. Here in the middle of the most absolute country, untamed, almost uncivilised, a little knot of courtly and educated people met together, free from the restraints of courts, in a fascinating companionship. All that was easy, natural, and mirthful in Margaret's nature aroused and answered to the genius of the place, and long after, in her busy and harassed life, the memory of Cauterets awoke a happy chord. As we shall see, three years afterwards, she chose the little Pyrennean Bath as the ideal meeting-place for the story-tellers of the "Heptameron."

The years from 1541 to 1544 were busy years to Margaret. Her political prestige, which, since 1538, had suffered an eclipse behind the great orb of Montmorency, shone out again now that he had passed out of favour. With the revived antagonism of Francis to the Emperor, a time of prosperity opened for the tolerant Liberalism of which Margaret was the principal exponent. Francis behaved with clement magnanimity to the rebellious Huguenots of La Rochelle; and no more stakes in Paris flamed with the fuel of a human sacrifice. The court at Fontainebleau was all for tolerance and the New Ideas. The Psalms of David in Marot's version rang sweetly to the airs of "Que dites-vous ensemble?" and other popular vaudevilles, which in a modern hearing still suggest the anthem rather than the dance. The Dauphin himself, who was ever fond of music, composed a tune for his favourite psalm; and all the personages of the Court who a year or two before had expressed their individuality in mottoes and posies, now adopted particular texts and verses, which they considered peculiarly appropriate to themselves. There exists a portrait of Diane de Poictiers, with written around that unemotional, provocative face the verse that runs in English, "Like as the hart after the water brooks, so yearns my soul for Thee, O God;" and no doubt this respectable lady (less the courtezan than the morganatic wife), saw nothing humorous in her position as a leader of fashionable piety. She was eminently *bien-pensante*, and the only thing surprising to her contemporaries in this devotion was that so eminent a Catholic should quote a work so doubtfully orthodox as the Psalms. Cardinal de Tournon was genuinely alarmed; and Villemadou, Margaret's

envoy, was pleasantly surprised at the vogue for psalm singing which had invaded the Court of Fountainebleau. They might have spared their alarm and their surprise. This Lutheran piety was but the passing fashion of an hour.

Three years later the fashion had gone by; the peace of Crécy had woven a disastrous bond of brotherly affection between the Emperor and the King of France. Charles V. had promised Milan to the youngest son of Francis, and Italian things were all the mode at Court. Diane was greater than ever, supported by the Guises ("ink cannot express the omnipotence of this lady!" writes Ricasoli), but she no longer wore a text for aureole round her head. Music was still the vogue, but not the Psalms of Marot. "The Prince of Salerno is still at Fontainebleau," wrote Bernardo de Medici in December. "He has made guitars all the fashion here. Every lady has her own, and they make him sing a couple of Neapolitan songs every evening." The Scriptures and the Commentaries of Lefèbvre were laid upon the shelf; and all the reading now was from the hundred novels of Boccacio, recently translated into French by Antoine Le Maçon, one of the gentlemen of the Queen of Navarre. "In this book," said Margaret, "so much delight was taken by the most Christian King, Francis, first of the name, by my Lord Dauphin, Madame the Dauphiness, and Madame Marguerite, that if Boccacio from the place where he is could have heard their voices, he would have been brought to life again by the praise of such as they."

Yet while the Court of the Dauphin rang with gay Neapolitan airs, and people at Court took their pleasure, the King had grown old and ill and melancholy. In the

autumn of 1544 he had sent for Margaret to come from Alençon to amuse him. To amuse a blasé king is, as a proficient in that art has told us, "*amuser l'inamusable.*" Margaret was grateful to the novels of the Decameron, which chased away for an hour or two the pain and depression of her brother. She began to tell him stories of her own, an accomplishment in which the gifted Parlamente excelled. "Elle triompha de bien dire et bien haranguer," wrote Brantôme, who cannot say too much of "sa bonne grace et son beau dire," and she describes herself in her own novels as "knowing well how to tell a story with point and grace." We know that Madame Marguerite, her niece, and her niece-in-law, Madame Catherine de Medécis, tried to imitate her talent all in vain, and gave up the attempt from a conviction of their own inferiority. But when Margaret was at Court these two young ladies were still in the full zest of their intention. "These two illustrious princesses," we read in the Prologue to the "Heptameron," "have determined also to make a Decameron; only in one thing different from Boccaccio—that they would write no novel that should not be the truth. And with M. le Dauphin with them, and as many as would make ten persons in all (such as they considered worthy to tell their stories), they decided each to write ten. But they would not admit students or men of letters to their number, for Monseigneur le Dauphin did not wish that their art should be mingled with this sport. Also, he feared that the beauties of rhetoric might do wrong to some portion of the veritable story."

This task, as we know, came to nothing, partly because these young ladies, though clever, found themselves unequal to the task, and partly as Margaret

remarks, on account of the important historical events which took place in the autumn and winter of 1544. The task which they dropt, Margaret appears to have taken up, writing in her litter as she jogged along the bad roads of her Duchies of Berry and Alençon; "my grandmother holding the ink-horn," as Brantôme records, "for she wrote nearly all her novels as she rode along the roads, she was so busy with great occupations, even in her retirement. I have often heard my grandmother tell the story." Through that winter and the following spring, the earlier novels flowed from her facile pen, and in remembered Cauterets she placed the wittiest of her companions, and made them tell, as the Dauphin had intended, true stories of real life. Partly to this actuality of the "Heptameron" we must attribute its immense success at Court. To the literary interest, the dramatic interest, the pious interest, and the shameful interest of lubricity, it added exactly that peculiar interest which attracts the readers of the *World* and *Truth*, or the Strange True Stories of the *Pall Mall Gazette*. These tales were not only true, they were all about people with whom everybody was acquainted. "There is none among us," as Dagoucin observes, "who does not know the kinsfolk on both sides." On this account the Court at Fontainebleau swallowed many a pious exposition, many a text; and on this account, let us own, we swallow many a light adventure, many a gross or brutal tale to-day. And here, because it is very tiresome and a little insincere to hunt about to find new words for a thought expressed before, I may perhaps be forgiven for repeating one page from my life of Margaret of Angoulême. The real salt of the "Heptameron," as I confided to my readers then, lies in this naïve, uncon-

sidered, and unselected realism. A great many details, quite absurd and trivial in themselves, which Queen Margaret introduced merely because so they happened, or so she heard them told, surprise and delight us by their fresh veracity. From the very first novel of all we seem plunged into a strange world of contrasts, a world of beautiful light-minded ladies, to whom as to Ennasuitte, the life or death of common people is a trivial alternative. These exquisite creatures ("si divines et délicates," as Margaret herself wrote of Madame d'Estampes) spend their time in broidering in open-work, red silken counterpanes; in reading (they all know it by heart) *La Belle Dame sans Merci;* in devising interviews with their lovers; or in visiting the fashionable magician of the town in order to observe the wasting of the waxen images of those whom they design to slay. (Galléry was this wizard's name. He tried to remove Queen Margaret herself. It gives us a little shock to meet him in such refined and cultured society.) But there are strange flaws in the splendour of this sumptuous civilization. Torture is still used in the civic trials of Alençon, where the Duke has absolute power of life and death like any Duke in Shakespeare's plays. Ten crowns is the proper wage for a hired assassin (we are delighted to know the exact fee), and sanctuary is still given to such gentry in palaces and churches, though the ends of justice are usually secured by a process of starving out the refugees. All this seems out of date beside the general spread of wealth and comfort. Even among the lower bourgeoisie, servants are to be found in every house, engaged by the quarter, not by the year, as in England. There is abundance of rich tapestries; in the humblest household the beds, even of the servants,

are well and warmly curtained; and the *Lit d'honneur* is large enough to hold several persons. It is still considered a mark of esteem to invite a distinguished guest to share the couch of the host and hostess, yet, in other respects, there is no lack of privacy. The wives of the small burghers—of the clerks, the shopkeepers—have dressing-rooms and parlours; their houses have large gardens and orchards. There is plenty of room. There is, also, plenty of money. When the clerk's son goes to woo the draper's daughter, he and his mother make a great purchase of thick silks ("for, as for money, you know how little these shopkeepers are in need of *that* sort of drug," cries Margaret), and the women dress in taffetas, in silks, even in velvet, "which was once only worn by women of good family," and the men, even of the humbler sort, astonished the Venetian envoys by the splendour of their silk apparel.

There is no dearth of good cheer, of comfort, even of luxury among these people, who may none the less be burned for heresy or witchcraft, or tortured with cord and rack if they offend the law. The chief blot on this rich diffusion of wealth, is the corruption of the clergy. The confessor, if all tales be true, is a serious danger in every household; and the convents and monasteries offer to innocent youth temptations infinitely grosser than the temptations of the world outside. Yet lax, immoral, irreligious as it is, this good-humoured and vigorous world of the "Heptameron" compares favourably enough with the world of the Italian novelists, full of wars, plague, cruelty, and unnatural vices; and although by far less pure, it is in many respects superior to the world of Cervantes' *Novelas*, with its violent contrasts of squalid beggars and merchants from the Indies

fabulously rich, with its gold fever in the air, its epidemic of vagabondage, its national blight of jealousy and slavery and superstition. By the sides of these pictures of Italy and Spain, we see in the "Heptameron" a world full of good humour and well-being, of life and wealth and stirring impulse, of signs of prosperity and vigour. And, such as it is, this world is the world of Margaret and her contemporaries. The life, the manners, even the persons of those bygone years continue for us in these enchanted pages. And as we rummage among their out-dated gallantry, their dubious adventures, their strangely fashioned piety (imagine Dame Quickly in a Geneva cap and bands!), we find forgotten among the incongruous medley, a handful of the Life of the Past; we feel it warm in our hands as we had never hoped to feel it, and, for its sake, we pardon a multitude of sins.

VIII.

The "Heptameron" was little more than half completed when the ailing King for whose diversion it was written had gone beyond the reach of the most loving entertainment. On the 31st of March, in the year 1547, King Francis died. For more than a fortnight no one ventured to acquaint his sister with his death; but while the anxious courtiers paused and tarried, and made excuses, Queen Margaret discovered her bereavement for herself. In the convent where she was staying, there was a crazy nun; and one day in April, hearing this unhappy innocent weeping in the cloisters as if for a very heart-break, the gentle Queen went to the poor, harmless fool, and stooped above the crouching figure, and tried to comfort her. "For *you*, Madame, for you,

Madame. I weep for *you!*" cried the demented girl. Then Margaret knew what no one sane had dared to tell her—Francis the First was dead.

With Francis died the influence of Margaret, much of her income, all her interest in great affairs. She was no one now. She sat at home at Nérac, or in the convent at Tusson, trying to make both ends meet spending nothing on herself (in one year not quite a livre for wooden combs and pins), trying to reduce the thoughtless extravagance of gay little Jeanne in Paris. The Egeria of the Valois had shrunk into nothing more majestic than a melancholy anxious housewife. Seven months after the death of Francis, Ricasoli wrote to the Grand Duke of Tuscany: "And one thing that seems to me especially worthy of remark is the continued absence from Court of the Queen of Navarre; she has never been here once; not once has she encountered the new king, and it is the same with regard to the King of Navarre." The prestige of Margaret was at an end.

The Court was still divided into two parties, but neither of them was now the party of Margaret. The Liberals, if we may call them so, had disappeared utterly from view, and only the party of the Dauphin remained, divided now into two different camps, each of which regarded Henri as its chief, its patron, and its exponent. On one side of him were ranged the Guises and Diane de Poictiers; on the other, Queen Catherine, Montmorency, and Vendôme. It is necessary to us to notice their position, because almost the first political Act of Henri II. was to marry his cousin Jeanne d'Albret to a French prince. Either party at the Court put forth a pretender to the hand which carried in its slender grasp the kingdom of Navarre. The

Guises nominated François de Guise, Duc d'Aumale. The party of Montmorency named as its candidate Antoine de Bourbon, the Duke of Vendôme.

Margaret, as I have said, was represented by neither party; yet, of the twain, she preferred the politics of Montmorency to those of his opponents. Towards the Guises she felt that presage of evil, that instinctive antipathy which had haunted her brother in his dying hours; and though none knew better than she the tyrannous temper, the black bile, the sour severity of Montmorency, there was in the man something upright, honest, and even noble, which made it impossible for Margaret, in spite of injury and insult, to forget or to repudiate their ancient friendship. After the death of Francis she appears to have drawn closer to Montmorency. She and the old Constable were equally outraged and aggrieved, when at the French Court, Aumale was suggested as a husband for the heiress of Navarre. "That villain!" cried the old Constable. "The Queen of Navarre will not even hear him mentioned," writes Ricasoli in November.

It was not only her hatred of the Guises that gave Margaret the resolution to oppose the match. Henri of Navarre had always hoped to marry the girl in Spain, and it is difficult to acquit Margaret of some complicity in his design. It is certain she was suspected of it at Court; for all letters and packets addressed to the King and Queen of Navarre were privately opened by Montmorency in search of treasonable correspondence. Henri II. was determined to attach Navarre to France, and not to Spain, but he was not obstinate in pushing the fortunes of Aumale. When he heard of his aunt's bitter dislike to this suitor, he

quietly brought forward another to whom no valid objection could be made. The Duke of Vendôme was a sort of nephew of Margaret's: the son of her sister-in-law of Alençon. He was young, rich, pious, with a leaning towards reform, chivalrous and gentle. He was the first prince of the blood after the royal children. Yet Margaret and her husband continued indirectly to oppose this marriage which their daughter welcomed with enthusiasm. Jeanne was as eager to marry Antoine de Bourbon, young, French, amiable, and generous, as she had been determined not to marry William of Cleves. Again she was successful, Henri II. triumphed over the vague obstacles put forward by his aunt and her husband; and, on the 20th October 1548, Jeanne was married, the most cheerful bride in France.

The gay little girl, full of songs and laughter, accompanied her father and mother on some visits in Guienne and to Nevers; and the joyous temper of Jeanne must have cheered her mother; for Margaret, whom Henri II. describes in October as "crying more than any woman you ever saw," a few months later is continuing the "Heptameron," apparently on excellent terms with her daughter and her son-in-law. But her cheerful moments were few and rare. A melancholy lethargy weighed her down, a horror of death, an impotent curiosity as to the existence of soul possessed her. She was dying. To die, to die. We all do it. And what is it to die? To drop into the abyss of non-existence: so says the natural man. To escape from a world of shows into *Whatever is:* so speaks the philosophic thought. To return to God: so hopes the soul of faith. Margaret was a pious woman, yet when

the women who loved her spoke with her of Paradise, she would sigh very uneasily, "All that is true—and yet. And yet *we stay so long under the earth before we get there!*" The physical and material bias of her nature, which had made living easy, made dying difficult. The obvious fate of the body was dreadful to her; dreadful also the uncertain destiny of the soul.

To die! How different the world looks in the strange uncertain moonlight of the thought of Death! Margaret was not happy; the melancholy, the lethargy that possessed her grew deeper and colder day by day. Nothing gave her pleasure; yet, when her physicians told her she must die, she wept, and prayed to live, and wept again. Only to live! Only to feel the solid earth still firm under the living frame—to see the sun—to be whole, and sane, and alive. Not yet to be shut down in that black chasm open under all our feet. "Oh, I am not so old yet," she cried; "but I might yet have a year to live!" She was not old, she was but fifty-seven. But while she was rebelling at her fate, and protesting her valid years, a young girl among her maidens died. Margaret had loved the child, and sat by her to the end, entranced—not with despair or love, but with curiosity and horror. With fixed eyes, in a monomaniac persistency of gaze, she dwelt on the face of the sufferer. She was dead. "But the soul!" cried the queen, "how did the soul escape? I looked for the soul to watch it issue from her lips, and I beheld nothing."

When it was possible, Margaret escaped from her dread of dying into her novels, her songs, her voluminous correspondence. With these she tried to bar out the future, as the wintry nights bar out the day from

our windowpanes with their fine ineffectual screens of frost-work. Strange to think of this dying woman dying in such a horror as Claudio knew, yet striving to engage or to distract her mind by impious little stories of adultery. With what a bitter under-current of conviction must she not have penned the novel which records how a certain lord, standing at the death-bed of his wife, turned, before the breath had left her body, to kiss the chambermaid. For the old love between Margaret and her husband had turned now into something discordant, bitter, disenchanted. "There is no love lost," laughs the King of France, "between my good aunt and her husband—never were a couple less united. . . . . She is at daggers drawn with him. You never saw any woman cry so much as she when her daughter went away; and if it had not been for me she would never have gone back with her husband. . . . As for him, you know the man! He thinks of nothing but amassing a fortune and making good cheer. And now that his daughter is once safely married, he pretends to be the best contented father in the world."

This is our last glimpse of *Parlamente* and *Hircan*. On the 21st of December 1549, at the castle of Odos, Margaret died. "She was," as the Venetian Cavalli wrote, "the wisest not only of the women but of the men of France." She had done good work in her day—good work, of which the "Heptameron" ranks as by far the least. Yet, with the fatality inherent in human things, none of her labour was permanent. She had protected religious liberty, and the red dawn of the Saint Bartholomew was but a cloud's breadth below the dull horizon. She had striven all her life to weld together the Liberal league. France and England,

Venice and Hungary, Turkey and Switzerland, they all fell apart like beads when the string is broken.

It is by the least of her work that she is the most remembered. Nine years after her death a certain Pierre Boiastuau gathered together the novels of the Queen of Navarre, familiar in manuscript to the Courts of two kingdoms, and Gilles of Paris published *Les Amans fortunez.* Next year in 1559, Claude Gruget brought out another edition, and called this unfinished new Decameron by a name of his own lucky finding: "The Heptameron of the Queen of Navarre." In both these collections many passages (unfitted to the age of the Index Expurgatorius and the Council of Trent) were expurged; and the halo of the Grey Friar was not darkened by the malicious veracity of Margaret. The book obtained a great success. It was in 1654 translated into English to delight the Court of the Puritan Cromwell. In France edition followed edition, altered and beautified to suit the taste of successive centuries. Finally in 1853, M. Le Roux de Lincy published an edition after the original manuscripts in the Bibliothèque Nationale, of which the careful text remains unequalled. M. La Croix in 1858, and M. Félix Frank in 1879 have edited the "Heptameron" with learned and abundant notes. M. Montaiglon and M. Génin have added their weighty evidence. The research of many scholars has carried a light into the dark places. The gate is open. Whosoever will may enter; and, as the German peasants thought to find Barbarossa sitting eternally with his knights in an enchanted chamber, so in the everlasting meadows of the "Heptameron" we have found Queen Margaret and her companions, their faces, it is true, a little indistinct in the twilight, but still alive and still discoursing, oblivious of the flight of time.

# PROLOGUE.

On the first day in September,[1] when as the springs of the Pyrenean mountains begin to assume their virtue, there came together at those of Cauterets many persons from France, Spain, and other countries ; some to drink of the water, some to bathe therein, and others to take the mud-bath. And each and all of these are so marvellous in their operation that men given up by the doctors return from Cauterets whole and sound. Yet my aim is neither to show forth the place nor the virtue of these springs aforesaid, but only to relate that which appertaineth to the matter on which I am about to write. Now there tarried in this place for more than three weeks all the sick folk, until they discovered by the good case of their bodies that it was fit for them to return. But at the time appointed for their setting forth, there fell such great rains that it seemed as if God had forgotten the promise that He made to Noah, not again to destroy the world by water, since by it all the cottages of Cauterets were so filled that no one could dwell therein. And those who came from the land of Spain returned thither by the mountains, as best they could, and, trust me, they who had a good knowledge of the tracks were the ones to fare best. But the ladies and gentlemen of France, thinking to get them back to

[1] In September 1541 Queen Margaret visited the baths of Cauterets with her husband.

Therbes as easily as they came, found the rivulets so swollen, that they were hardly to be crossed. And having come to the Gave Béarnois, which when they went was not more than two feet deep, they found it so mighty and rushing a stream that they turned aside to seek for bridges, but these being but of wood had been carried away by the strength of the torrent. Some indeed, believing that they could withstand its force by fording it in a body, were so quickly borne away, that the rest, though they would fain cross, had small wish to do so ; and so, as their inclination was, they separated and went in divers directions to seek for some new way. Some taking the mountain track, and passing through Arragon, came to the county of Rousillon and to Narbonne, and others fared straight to Barcelona, whence sailing they got to Marseilles and Aigue-morte.

But a certain widow, of much experience, named Oisille, determined to lay by all fear of the bad roads, and to journey to Our Lady of Serrance. Not that she was of so superstitious a mind as to think that the glorious Virgin would leave her session by the right hand of her Son, and dwell in that desert land, but only for her great desire of seeing that holy place of which so great a noise had come to her ears, and being assured likewise that if there were any way out of this peril, the monks would be advised thereof. And this she accomplished, yet traversing such a wild country and ways as hard to go up as to come down, that although she was old and slow in movement, she had to go the best part of the journey on foot. But of this the worst was that most of her folk and her horses died on the way, so she came to Serrance, having one man

and one woman only, and was there taken in and kindly entreated by the monks.

Now there were among the French travellers two gentlemen who had gone to the springs, rather that they might accompany their ladies than for any failing in their health. And seeing that the company was setting forth, and that the husbands of their ladies were likewise taking them away, they thought fit to follow them from afar, without making anyone privy to their design. But it came to pass that one evening when the married gentlemen were lodged with their wives at the house of one who was more a robber than a churl, that the lovers of these ladies, who were also lodged in a cottage hard by, heard at night a great tumult. Whereupon they and their servants arose, and enquired of their host what this noise might be. And he, much afraid, told them that it was some Roaring Boys, who had come to take their share of the booty that was at the house of the robber, their comrade; at which the young gallants forthwith laid hold of their arms, and with their servants went to the succour of the ladies, accounting death for them far sweeter than life without them. And when they came to the place they found the outer gate broken in, and the two husbands with their servants defending themselves full bravely. But since the number of the robbers was great, and they were grievously wounded, having by this time lost the greater part of their servants, they were beginning to give way. The two gallants, seeing their ladies wailing and entreating at the windows, were worked by pity and love to such a point of courage that, after the fashion of two bears rushing down from the mountains, they burst upon the robbers and so handled them that many were killed,

and those left alive would not stay for any more blows, but escaped to their hiding place as best they could. The two gallants, having put these villains to flight, and killed the host among the rest, heard that the hostess was worse than her mate, whereupon they, with the thrust of a sword, sent her to join him. Next, entering into one of the lower rooms they found therein one of the married gentlemen, who presently gave up the ghost. The other was scot-free of wounds, yet was all his vesture pierced with sword-thrusts, and his own sword broken in two. This poor man, beholding before him his rescue, prayed the young men, after both embracing and thanking them, by no means to leave him, which was to them a request mighty pleasant. And after they had buried the dead man, and comforted, after the best sort they could, his widow, they set forth again, not knowing which road to take, but leaving it in God's hands. And if it be your pleasure to know the names of these three gentlemen, the one who was married was called Hircan, and his wife Parlamente, and the widow was Longarine. And the names of the two gallants were Dagoucin and Saffredent. And after that they had been all the day on horseback, toward evensong they made out a spire, whither, after much travail and labour, they arrived. Now this was the spire of the abbey of St Savyn, and here they were taken in and well entreated by the abbot and his monks. And the abbot, who was of a noble house, gave them good lodging, and as he waited upon them to their rooms, enquired of them their hap. And having heard how bad it was he told them that they were not alone in tasting of misfortune, for he had in one of his rooms two ladies who had escaped equal, if

not greater peril, since they had had to do not with men but with beasts, in whom there is no pity. For these poor ladies, when half a league on this side of Peyrechitte, had met a bear coming down from the mountain, from before which they had fled at such a rate that at the gate of the abbey their horses dropped dead under them, and two of their maids, who came in a long while after, told them that the bear had killed all their men-servants. Then did the two ladies and the three gentlemen go into the room where these unhappy ones were lodged, and found them weeping, and knew them for Nomerfide and Ennasiutte. So having embraced one another, they told what had befallen them, and in concert with the good abbot, comforted themselves for having again fallen into company. And in the morning they heard mass with much devotion, praising God for the perils which were overpast.

And while they were all at mass there came into the church a man clad only in his shirt, flying as if some one pursued him, and crying for help. Straightway did Hircan and the other gentlemen go forth to discover what the affair was; and there they beheld two men with drawn swords, who followed after him; and these seeing so great a number, would fain have fled; but Hircan and his company pursued them and put them to the sword. And when the aforesaid Hircan returned he found that the man clad in the shirt was Geburon, one of his comrades, who said that while he was in bed in a cottage near Peyrechitte there came upon him three men, and though he was in his shirt and armed only with a sword, he so shrewdly wounded one that he died upon the spot. And whilst the two

others set themselves to succour their fellow, he, perceiving that he was naked and the robbers armed, thought he could scarcely win save by flight, being little impeded by his dress. And for the good event of this he gave thanks to God, and to those who had for him done vengeance.

After they had heard mass and dined, they went to see if it were possible to cross the Gave, and seeing that it was not they were in great affray, although the abbot many times entreated them to abide there until the waters were abated, and to this for the day they agreed. And in the evening, as they were going to bed, there came an old monk who, for many a year, had failed not to be present during September at Our Lady of Serrance. And on their asking him the news of his journey, he said that by reason of the floods he had come by the mountain tracks, and that they were the worst roads he had ever been on. But one most pitiful case he had to tell, and this was that he had found a young gentleman named Simontault, who, weary of the long time the floods took to abate, had determined to force the passage, trusting in the goodness of his horse, and having first placed all his servingmen around him, thereby to break the force of the water. But when they were in mid-stream, those who were badly mounted were borne headlong, men and horses, down stream and were never rescued. The gentleman finding himself alone, turned his horse to the bank whence he came, yet not so sharply as to avail anything. But God willed that he was so near to the shore as to be able, drawing himself on his hands and knees, and drinking a great deal of water, to reach the rough flintstones on the bank, so weak and feeble

that he could not stand. But it chanced well for him that a shepherd, bringing his sheep home at evening, found him lying there among the stones, soaking wet, and sad at heart as well for himself as for his folk whom he had seen perishing before his eyes. The shepherd, who perceived his case more by his look than by his words, took him by the hand and led him to his cottage, where he dried him with a fire of broken sticks as well as might be. And, that night, God led thither this good monk, who showed him the way to Our Lady of Serrance, and told him he would be lodged there in better fashion than in any other place, and that he would find there an aged widow called Oisille, who was indeed his equal in misfortunes. And when all the company heard of the good lady Oisille, and the gentle knight Simontault, that they were safe, a great joy fell on them, and they praised the Creator that, deeming the serving-men and maids sufficient sacrifice, he had kept alive their master and mistress; and above all did Parlamente give thanks unto God from the bottom of her heart, for long ago he had been her most devoted servitor. And having made careful inquiry of the road to Serrance, although the good old man showed them how difficult it was, yet none the less did they determine to journey there; and on that very day did they set forth without lack of anything, for the abbot had given them of the best horses that were in Lavedan, and goodly cloaks of Bearn, and abundant store of food, and an escort to guide them safely across the mountains. And so, faring more on foot than horseback, with great sweat and travail they come to Our Lady of Serrance, where the abbot, though he was an inhospitable man, durst not refuse them lodging, for the

fear he had of the Lord of Béarn, by whom he knew them to be well beloved;[1] but he, being a well-taught hypocrite, put on for them his most obliging face, and led them to see the good lady Oisille and the gentle knight Simontault.

Now such delight was on the company, in such wondrous wise gathered together, that to them all the night seemed short, praising God in the church for the mercy he had showed toward them. And after that in the morning they had taken some short rest, they all went to hear mass and to receive the Holy Sacrament of concord, in which all Christians are united into one body, imploring Him who had gathered them together to perfect their journey to his glory. After dinner they sent to know if the floods were not yet abated, and finding that they were rather increased, they determined to make them a bridge, fixing it on two rocks which are very near to one another, and where there are still planks for those on foot, who, coming from Oleron, may wish to cross the Gave. In much delight was the abbot that they performed this at their own charges, to the end that the number of pilgrims and gifts should be increased for him, and so he furnished them with labourers, yet not one farthing did he give of his own, for he was too miserly. And since the labourers said that the bridge could not be finished before ten or twelve days, both the men and women of the company began to be very weary; but Parlamente, the wife of Hircan, who was never listless or melancholy, having asked of her husband leave to speak, spoke thus to the aged lady Oisille: "Good

[1] Of course the Lord of Béarn was Henri d'Albret, that is to say, Hircan himself.

mistress, I am amazed that you, who have had so great experience, and who stand towards us women as a mother, do not think of some pastime wherewith to subdue this weariness of ours at the long delay; for if we do not get some pleasant and seemly pursuit we shall be in danger of growing sick." To this added the young widow Longarine: "And what is worse we shall grow peevish, and hardly to be cured thereof; for if you will consider there is no man nor maid amongst us but has occasion enough for sorrow." Ennasiutte, laughing, replied to her: "Not every one of us has lost a husband as you have, and as for serving-men one need not despair on their account, for others are to be had; natheless I am well persuaded that we should have some pleasant pursuit to pass the time, or else we shall be dead by the morrow." All the gentlemen were of their mind, and would have the lady Oisille declare to them what they should do, and she thus replied: "My children, it is a hard thing this that you ask of me, to show you some pastime that will free you from your weariness. For this I have sought through my whole life, and only one pastime have I found—namely, the reading of the Holy Scriptures, where is found the true and perfect joy of the spirit, whence there cometh health and rest to the body. And if you ask how I, at my years, can be so cheerful and healthy, I tell you that when I rise in the morning I straightway take the Holy Scriptures and read therein, considering and meditating on the goodness of God in sending, for our sake, His Son upon the earth to make manifest those good tidings in which He doth promise forgiveness of all sins, and satisfaction for all trespasses through the gift of His love, passion, and merits. This it is that

makes me to be glad, so that I take my psalter, and in most lowly fashion do sing from my heart and indite with my mouth those psalms and canticles with which the Holy Spirit hath inspired David and the other writers. And this delight that I have in them is so great that all mishaps the day can bring show to me but as blessings, seeing that I have in my heart by faith Him who hath borne my sorrows. In like manner before I sup I go apart to give my soul His pasture in the Scriptures, and then in the evening I recall to my mind all that I have done during the day that is past, asking of God pardon for my sins, and thanking Him for the grace which He hath bestowed upon me; so in His love, and fear, and peace, I take my rest well assured against all perils. Behold, then, my children, the pastime to which I am attached, and have been a long while, after having searched all others, and not finding contentment therein for my spirit. Methinks, therefore, that if in the mornings you would give an hour to reading, and this done, pray devoutly at mass, you would find in this desert place a greater beauty than there is in cities, for he who knoweth God beholds all things beautiful in Him, and without Him nothing is fair; wherefore I entreat you that you receive my counsel, if you would live joyously." Next did Hircan take up the discourse, and said: "Good mistress, those who have read the Holy Scriptures, as I believe we all have, will agree that what you say is altogether true. Natheless, you must consider that these bodies of ours are not so mortified as not to need also some exercise, for if we were at our houses we should have hunting and falconry, to make us forget our idle thoughts; while the ladies have their housewifery, their tambour-

work, and sometimes dancing, wherein they can take seemly exercise. And all this makes me say (speaking on behalf of the men) that you, who are most in years, shall read to us in the morning time somewhat of the life of our Lord Jesus Christ, and of the mighty and admirable works that He hath done for us; but as to the hours between dinner and evensong we have yet to find some pastime that may be wholesome for the soul and pleasant to the body, and so with all this shall the day be passed joyously."

The lady Oisille said she had had such toil to put out of mind all worldly vanities that she feared any choice of hers would be a bad one; but it was necessary to put the matter to the vote, and would have Hircan give his opinion first. "As for me," said Hircan, "I am assured that Parlamente, my wife, better than any other, can tell us of some pastime for all; and I do herewith profess myself of her mind, whatever it may be, and will in this matter be led entirely by her." And to this the whole company agreed. Whereupon Parlamente, seeing that the lot was fallen upon her, spoke as follows: "If I felt within me such parts as had the ancients by whom were all arts invented, I would invent some game to discharge the duty that you have laid upon me; but knowing my wit and my power, how little it is, and scarce able so much as to call to mind how others have performed well this very thing, I shall esteem myself lucky if I can but follow in their steps. Among the rest I think that there is not one of you who has not read those Hundred Novels of Boccaccio, lately done from the Italian into French. These did King Francis, first of his name, his Highness the Dauphin, the Princess his wife, and my lady

Margaret his sister, esteem at such a price that if old Boccaccio could have heard them from the place where he is, he would have been, through the praises of such mighty folk, well-nigh brought to life again. And I hear that these two illustrious ladies [1] have determined

[1] Madame Marguerite de France, the youngest daughter of Francis I., afterwards married the Duke of Savoy; she was a very learned young lady, the Minerva of the Royal Court at Paris. In all her studies she was seconded by her sister-in-law, the Dauphine Catherine de' Medici. Catherine, left an orphan in her babyhood, was the great-grandchild of Lorenzo the Magnificent, and the only child of Lorenzo de Medici, Duke of Urbino by his marriage with a French heiress, Madeleine de la Tour d'Auvergne. Within a year of their marriage, bridegroom and bride were dead, and Catherine, brought up in the Convent of Le Murate at Florence, became the ward, and, as it were, the niece par excellence of the Papacy. She was the great-niece of Leo X., the second cousin once removed of Clement VII., so that the actual relationship was slight, but as the only unmarried and legitimate daughter of the House of Medici, the position of Catherine, under the Medici Popes, was important. Through her mother, she inherited great possessions in France, and these were often brought forward by King Francis and his mother as a pretext for bringing up the little girl at the Court of Paris. The second volume of Desjardin's "Diplomatic Negociations" contains frequent reference to the childhood of the *Duchessina*:— "The King and Madame implore she may be well-treated," writes Carducci in 1529. "We told them it was impossible she could be better treated than at present, for, was she not receiving her education at the most respectable convent of Christendom—I mean the *Murate* of Florence? . . . But they wish, with the Pope's good pleasure, to have the Duchessina in their own hands, fearing the Pope will give her a husband contrary to their interests—for they know how he holds to keeping her in Italy, and they would like to marry her to a Frenchman." The manuscript letters of Du Bellay (Bib. Nat., Paris, 3076, 3077, 3078, 3079—5147, 5148, 5149) show further light on the desire of Francis and his mother to secure the little Duchess of Urbino. In the first place, in 1529, Francis had revived his claims on Naples and Milan. We know that in December he was in correspondence with the Emperor concerning the Will of King René of Anjou, and the Marriage Contract of Valentine Visconti. If the Emperor would not listen to reason, he was prepared to try other means: Du Bellay in London was even then negotiating a Secret

to make likewise a Decameron, but yet in one thing they will have it different from Boccaccio's—namely, every history therein contained shall be the truth. And their intent was that they, and his Highness with them, should each make ten stories, and afterwards should bring together ten persons whom they rated as most capable of telling them; but they would have no schoolmen or practised men of books, for his Highness must have nature and not art, and was in fear lest the truth of the histories might fare badly through odd-becoming tricks of rhetoric. But divers high affairs of state, as the peace between the King and the King of England, the bringing to bed of the Princess, and other

League between France, England, Hungary, Venice, and the Pope, according to which the Pope was to receive Ravenna and Cervia from Venice, and to depose the Emperor in the interest of France and England. The Pope showed himself favourable to the League, yet neither Wolsey nor Du Bellay felt sure of the shifty Clement. A marriage between a French prince and Catherine de Medici would be some sort of guarantee, and, moreover, Francis I., who meant to bequeath his second son the French claims to Milan and to Naples, was not blind to the value of Catherine's pretensions to Florence and Urbino. There was also a plan to endow Madame Catherine with Piacenza, Parma, and Leghorn. Here were abundant reasons for a marriage; and, as a matter of fact, in 1533 the Duchessina, then fourteen years old, and a pretty, plump, merry, affectionate child, was married to Henri, Duke of Orleans, the second and least-beloved son of Francis, a solemn, romantic, and conventional young prince.

But it was not ordained that Catherine should ever be the Princess of an Italian State. The king's negotiations came to nothing—"Aussi se peut il dire qu'il a pris une fille comme toute nuë pour bailler à son second filz," laments du Bellay. The estrangement between France and England, the murder of her half-brother at Florence, and the establishment there of a distant branch of Medici, the death of Pope Clement—all these events closely following on her marriage, made Catherine a less intrinsically important personage. Florence and Rome looked coldly on her now. But, at the same time, the sudden death of the Dauphin raised her to a great position in France; "la fille du Marchand," as Diane de Poitiers used

matters of great consideration, have given all this scheme to forgetfulness at Court ; but by reason of the long delay we shall be able to accomplish it by the ten days in which the bridge is to be brought to a completion. And if it please you, every day from noon to four o'clock we will go to that pleasant meadow that is stretched along the Gave, where so thickly do the trees grow that the sun cannot pierce them through with his heat. There, seated at our ease, let each of us tell some story that he has either seen with his eyes or heard from the lips of a faithful witness. At the end of ten days we shall have summed up the hundred, and if

to call her, had become the wife of the heir to the throne. In this exalted rank she was sorely out of place ; she, who would have been the best possible wife for a French Duke of Milan or a French King of Naples, was scarcely a fitting consort for the King of France. As time went on, and, nine years after marriage, Catherine remained a childless woman, rumours of a divorce grew and strengthened in the Court of France. Her husband did not love her, she had no children, her kinsmen were at present useless to the policy of France : Catherine had little on her side. Yet she had one powerful ally. Diane de Poitiers, the Dauphin's mistress, keen enough to perceive the danger to her own influence of a more illustrious bride, and, also, as I imagine, drawn by a real attraction to the humble, gentle, neglected little Florentine, played the unexpected part of her advocate. She drew the husband and his wife together—"It is wonderful," writes the Venetian Ambassador Cavalli, "how she has made another man of the Dauphin, who used not to love his wife at all, but was vain and full of mockery." The reconciliation was completed when, in January 1544, Catherine bore her husband a son and heir. It is just at this moment that the Queen of Navarre heard her niece Margaret and her niece-in-law Catherine project a new Decameron under the supervision of the Dauphin. The not unhappy little domestic picture indicated here is supported by the testimony of the Tuscan Ambassadors ; they write in December 1544, "The Dauphine is all for study, such a lady of letters, and so deeply read in Greek that every man is abashed to witness so much learning in a woman. She is infinitely respected by all, and by every one here she is cherished, favoured, adored, and loved."

God grants that our relations be pleasing to those lords and ladies aforesaid, we will lay them at their feet on our return from this journey in place of images or paternosters, to which I am assured they will be greatly preferred. Yet if any of you shall bring out a more pleasant pastime than this, to him I will give my vote." But all the company replied with one voice that than this there could be nothing better, and that they were weary for the morning to come, whereon to make a beginning of it.

So was this day joyously passed, one telling to another such notable things as he had seen in his life. But as soon as the morning was come, they went to the room of Oisille, whom they found at her prayers. And when for a full hour they had attended to her reading, and after this had devoutly heard mass, they went to dinner, it being now ten o'clock. And at noon they failed not, according to what had been determined, to go to the meadow, which was of such a sort that it would need Boccaccio himself to tell the pleasantness of it; but be you contented and know surely that never was there meadow to vie with it. And when all this company was seated in order on the grass, that was so fine and soft that no need was there of rugs or carpeting, Simontault began to say, "Who shall be the one to rule over us?" To whom Hircan: "Since you were the first to speak, it is fitting that you bear rule, for in the game we are all equal." "God knows," said Simontault, "that I would desire no bliss in the world so much as to bear rule over this company." At this speech of his, Parlamente told Simontault to begin; and this he did.

# DAY THE FIRST.

IN WHICH DAY ARE RECOUNTED THE BAD TURNS DONE BY WOMEN TO MEN, AND BY MEN TO WOMEN.

## NOVEL I.

*The Misdeeds of the Wife of a certain Proctor, who had a Bishop for her Gallant.*

FAIR ladies, I have had such a poor reward for all my long service that, to avenge me on Love, and her whose heart is so hard toward me, I am about to recount to you the misdeeds done of women on us poor men; and I will tell you nothing but the whole truth.

In the town of Alençon, in the time of the last Duke Charles, there was a proctor named St Aignan,[1] who

[1] According to the "Letters of Remission" (Archives Nationales, J. 234, No. 191), printed by M. Le Roux de Lincy, this adventure must have happened fifteen months after the death of Duke Charles; for the letters dated July 1526, speak of the murder as having happened in the current month, but this must be through some clerical error, since we know from Margaret's novel, that her husband was alive, and her brother in France at the time of the murder. According to the document, Michel de St Aignan, Seigneur de St Aignan, had lived somewhile in Alençon with honour and reputation. He had doubtless been attracted by the great fame of the learned ducal court there, and, as the novel informs us, he married a lady of the place. The St Aignans, an ancient and distinguished House, were lords of the fief and town of St Aignan in Touraine: their hotel in Paris still exists; one of the most beautiful of the many fine old houses in the Rue du Temple.

One branch appears to have established itself at Alençon. In Maury d'Oisille's "History of Séez," their name, and the silver shield with three vine leaves, appears in the register of the nobility of Alençon.

had for wife a gentlewoman of the country. And she, having more beauty than virtue, and being of a fickle disposition, was courted by the Bishop of Séez,[1] who for a long while courted this evil woman, who received him not for the love she bore him, but because her husband, being greedy of money, so commanded her. But her love she gave to a young man of Alençon, son of the lieutenant-general, and him she loved to madness; often obtaining of the Bishop to send her husband away, that she might see Du Mesnil, the son of the lieutenant, at her ease. And this fashion of life lasted long; while she loved the Bishop for profit, and Du

[1] Jacques de Silly, 60th Bishop of Séez, occupied that See from 1512 till 1539, when he was succeeded by Nicolas Dangu, the Dagoucin of the Heptameron. Jacques de Silly, brother of François de Silly, Seigneur de Lonray, was the brother-in-law of Longarine. Perhaps a family quarrel excused to some extent the bad taste of Parlamente in permitting Simontault to open her cycle of stories with so keen a homethrust at one of her companions. It is true that in the original edition of les Amans Fortunez, the names of the Bishop and Dumaisnil are not mentioned, but every hearer of the tale was naturally familiar with the personages of this adventure. In the lifetime of Marguerite de Lorraine, this Bishop of Séez had enjoyed a great prestige at the Ducal Court. He was a man of the world as well as a priest, and had been a Prothonotary before he entered Holy Orders. None the less his piety was edifying and exemplary. He introduced a severe and reforming spirit among his clergy; he disciplined the scandalous convent of the Benedictine nuns of Almanèches (whose corruption in 1517 aroused even Leo X. to speak in protest); he added to the Cathedral at Séez—the little Episcopal city midway between Alençon and Argentan; he set magnificent stained glass in the windows, and provided a service of silver for the altar; he built a new presbytery for his curates, and markets and churches for the poor; he consecrated and set in order the convents opened by the pious mother of Duke Charles. He was a scholar, and an edition of the Letters of Pico della Mirandola was dedicated to him. He was, in short, in all outer things, a wise, excellent, and liberal churchman, exemplary in every relation of life. Here we behold him as the offending, yet passive and unconscious, occasion of a terrible crime.

Mesnil for pleasure, and telling the last that all the pleasure she did the Bishop was only words, and these were for his sake.

One day when her husband had to go on some charges of the Bishop, she asked him to let her go into the country, saying that the town air was hurtful to her; and having got to her farmstead, she straightway wrote to Du Mesnil, enjoining him not to fail in coming to her at nine in the evening. This the poor gallant did; but at the porch he found the maid who was wont to let him in, who thus addressed him: "Go farther, friend, for here your place is taken." And he, thinking the proctor was come, asked her how they fared. The serving-maid, having pity on him, for that he loved so much, and was so little loved in return, and seeing, moreover, that he was comely, young, and of an honourable address, showed to him the frailty of her mistress, believing that when he heard this the flame of his love would be somewhat quenched. And she told him how the Bishop of Séez was there. Who then was in despair but Du Mesnil! yet scarcely could he believe the tale, and hid himself in a house hard by, where, remaining till three hours after midnight, he then saw the Bishop come out, not so well disguised but that he was more easily recognized than he desired.

And in this despair he made his way back to Alençon, whither this evil woman having returned, she came to speak to him, and would fain have fooled him in her old fashion. But he told her that she was too good, since she was so well acquainted with holy things, to speak to a poor sinner like himself, whose repentance, nevertheless, was so great that he hoped ere long his sin would be forgiven. So when she perceived that her

case was known to him, and that excuses, oaths, and promises availed nothing, she made complaint of him to her Bishop. And after having well pondered the matter with him, this woman came to her husband and told him that she could no longer live in Alençon, since the son of the lieutenant, whom he had accounted for a friend, did incessantly lay assault to her honour, wherefore she entreated him to take her to Argentan, to do away with all suspicion. To this her husband, who let himself be ruled by her, agreed. But they had been but a short while at Argentan when this evil one sent to Du Mesnil, saying that of all men in the world he was most wicked, and that she was well advised of his publicly speaking ill of her and the Bishop of Séez, for which she would labour to call him to account.[1]

[1] A very different and, I think, a finer version of this story is given in the "Letters of Remission." According to that document, Michel de St Aignan was an honourable, unsuspecting, and noble-hearted man, who being impressed with the cleverness of Jacques Dumaisnil, a young man of lower rank belonging to the professional class, secured him every advantage in his power, treated him as a loyal and an equal friend, and hoped to marry him to one of his kinswomen. Meanwhile, Jacques Dumaisnil courted the wife of his benefactor, who had always lived with her "en bonne, grande, et parfaicte amour." This was over now. Dumaisnil persuaded St Aignan's wife that her husband did not love her, that, indeed, he even desired her death. When St Aignan was out of doors, Dumaisnil would say—"How happy we two are together! We might be passing happy, if he were always out." Or he would pity her for being left too much alone: "You ought to have had a husband who would stay with you and cheer you and protect you!" Gradually, he accustomed his unhappy mistress—for by this time she had become his mistress—to the idea of St Aignan's murder and their subsequent marriage. But at Easter, St Aignan having gained some acquaintance with the truth of the matter through the confession of Madame de St Aignan's chambermaid, forbade his treacherous friend to visit at his house. None the less Dumaisnil was often seen prowling about the doors and garden of the Hôtel de St Aignan; and St Aignan, determined

The young man, who had spoken to her alone on the matter, yet fearing to get into disfavour with the Bishop, went forthwith to Argentan with two of his servants, and found his mistress at evensong at the Jacobins. He, kneeling by her side, spoke thus: "Mistress, I am come to this place to swear to you before God that I have spoken against your honour to no one save you yourself; and so evilly have you entreated me that what I told you was not the half of what you deserved. And if there be man or woman who will say that I have so spoken, here am I to give them the lie before your face." She, seeing that much folk were in the church, and that he had for companions two stout serving-men, constrained herself to speak to him in the most gracious sort she could, saying she made no manner of doubt but that he spoke the truth, and that she esteemed him too honourable to speak evil of any man, much less of her who had for him so great a love; but some tales had got to her husband's ears, on which account she would have him make declaration before her husband, that he had not told them, and believed them not at all. This he freely granted, and thinking to accompany her home, he would have taken her by the arm, but she told him that it would not be well for him to come with her, since her husband might suppose she had put the words into his mouth. And taking one of his servants by the sleeve of his doublet, she said, "Leave this man with me, and when it is time I will presently send him for

to secure his wife's honour, took her to live with him at Argentan, ten leagues away. But often the desperate Dumaisnil would ride so far to see his mistress. And one day when he chanced to meet the nurse with St Aignan's child, he exclaimed to the terrified woman: "I will kill your master if I die for it!"

you, but meanwhile do you go and rest in your lodging." And he, who knew not that she conspired against him, did as he was ordered.

To the servant she had taken with her, she gave supper, and when he often asked her if it was not time to look for his master, she told him that the hour would shortly come. And when night had fallen she privily sent one of her own serving-men to seek Du Mesnil, who, not knowing the evil that was to befall him, went with bold face to the house of the aforesaid St Aignan, where his mistress still kept his servant, so that he had only one with him. And when he came to the door of the house, the man who had brought him told him the lady wished much to speak with him before he came into the presence of her husband, and that she awaited him in a room with only his own servant with her,[1] and that he would do well to send the other to the door in front. This he did, and whilst he was going up a small and gloomy stair, the proctor, who had laid an ambush in a closet, hearing the noise of his steps, called out, "What is that?" And they told him that it was a man privily endeavouring to enter his house. Whereupon a fellow called Thomas Guerin,[2] an assassin by trade,

[1] Here again the story of the document differs from the novel. The letters declare that on the 8th of July Dumaisnil, in the company of two young men, quitted Alençon. They set out at two or three in the morning, "heure suspecte," and Dumaisnil was disguised out of his own rank in a shabby white pardessus and feathered hat. Arrived at Argentan, they hid themselves all day in the suburbs at the Sign of Our Lady. But at eleven o'clock at night Dumaisnil sallied forth, still in his disguise, and armed with a club; and finding the means to enter the house of St Aignan unsuspected in the darkness, he contrived to hide himself in a lofty dressing-closet opening out of the bedroom of St Aignan and his wife.

[2] Here again the stories differ. According to the document, St Aignan,

who to this intent had been hired by St Aignan, rushed forth and dealt the young man such blows with his sword that, for all the defence he might make, he fell dead between their hands. His servant who was with the lady said to her, "I hear my master talking on the stairs, and will go to him." But she held him back, saying, "Be not troubled, he will shortly be here." And a little after, hearing these words in his master's voice, "I am gone, and may God receive my soul," he would fain have succoured him. But she held him back, saying, "Be not troubled, my husband does but chastise him for these follies of his youth; come, let us go and see what is being done." And leaning against the balustrade of the stairs, she asked of her husband, "Is it finished?" And he said to her, "Come and see, for

quite ignorant of the arrival of Dumaisnil, was seated in the hall settling some affairs with a certain Maître Thomas Guerin, "qui estoit venu pour ses affaires." While talking with this man, St Aignan sent his servant Colas upstairs to fetch some trifle out of the dressing-room. But no sooner had Colas opened the door than Dumaisnil rushed at him, naked sword in hand. There was the sound of a scuffle along the stairs and passages. "To the rescue!" shouted St Aignan. "It must be a robber. Who has the right to come here so late?" In a little court near the stable St Aignan discovered Colas fighting a man in a white coat, who struck at him with a club. He did not recognise the young man in this disguise, but when Dumaisnil found himself suddenly confronted with this second adversary, he cried out, "Murder! confession!" and St Aignan recognised the voice, "merveilleusement perplex, esbahy et courrossé." Then wrath got the better of reason, and, out of his senses, St Aignan thrust once or twice at his foe, covering him the while with bitter reproaches. All at once, "'Tis true! 'tis too true! Pardon!" cried Dumaisnil, and dropped down dead. St Aignan, stupefied with horror, stood motionless, regarding the corpse of the man who once had been his friend. "What shall we do with the body?" cried the practical Colas. St Aignan started: he went to his wife's room and found her in bed and asleep. "Bury it in consecrated ground, or put it out in the street," he said. But Colas chose to bury the body in secret.

in this hour I have avenged you on him who has done you so much shame." So saying he gave with his dagger ten or twelve strokes into the body of him whom, when alive, he durst not have encountered.

After that the murder was done, and the two servants had fled to carry the news to the poor father, the aforesaid St Aignan considered how the thing might best be kept secret, and perceived that the two servants could not be admitted to bear witness, and that none in his house had seen it done, save the murderers, an old serving-woman, and a young girl of fifteen. The old woman he was fain privily to put away, but she, finding means to escape, took refuge in the liberties of the Jacobins.[1] And her witness was the best on the matter of the murder. The young girl stayed some days in his house, but he, having caused one of the murderers to bribe her, put her in an evil house in Paris, to the end that her witness might not be received. And, better to hide the murder, he had the body of the dead man burnt; and the bones which the fire had not consumed he made mingle with the mortar that was being used in building. This done he sent letters with great speed to court to ask for pardon,[2] letting it be understood that he had many times forbidden a man whom he suspected to enter his house. And this man, who would have dishonoured his wife notwithstanding that he was forbidden, had

[1] Criminals might still take refuge in sanctuary: yet, by starving them out, the ends of justice were secured. Women of ill fame could not bear witness in a court of justice.

[2] These are obviously the "Letters of Remission" which I have so often quoted. I have only seen the transcript by M. Le Roux de Lincy, and I cannot but think he has misread the date 1526 for 1520, 1521, 1522, or 1523, at which time Charles was still alive, and the king was in Paris.

come secretly by night to speak to her, wherefore having found him at the door of her room, and wrath casting out reason, he had slain him. But for all his haste he was not able to dispatch this letter to the chancellor's before the Duke and Duchess, who had been advised of what had taken place by the father of the murdered man, likewise sent to the chancellor, that pardon might not be granted him. Then, St Aignan, seeing that he could not obtain pardon, fled beyond seas to England, and his wife with him, and many of his kinsfolk. Yet before he set out, he made known to the murderer who had dealt the blow that he had seen express letters from the King, to take him and put him to death. And since, in return for the service he had done him he would gladly save his life, he gave him ten crowns for him to fly the realm. This he did, and has not been found to this day.

This murder was so confirmed by the servants of the dead man, by the old woman who had fled to the Jacobins, and by the bones which were found in the mortar, that the case was begun and brought to an end in the absence of St Aignan and his wife. Judgment went by default, they were condemned to death, to pay fifteen hundred crowns to the father of the murdered man, and the rest of their goods were escheated to the crown. St Aignan, seeing that though he was living in England, in France the law accounted him dead, accomplished so much by his services to some great lords, and by the favour of the kinsfolk of his wife, that the King of England entreated the King of France to grant him a free pardon,[1] and to restore to him his

[1] This passage makes me think that the real date of the flight of St Aignan must have been the autumn of 1520, when, in the sudden

goods and his offices. But the King of France being assured of the enormity of his crime, sent the case to the King of England, asking him if such a deed deserved pardon, and saying that to the Duke of Alençon alone it pertained to grant pardon for offences done in his duchy.[1] But for all these excuses he could not satisfy the King of England, who so earnestly entreated him that at last the proctor gained what he desired and returned to his home. And there, to fill up the measure of his wickedness, he called to him a wizard, named Gallery, hoping by this means to escape the paying of the fifteen hundred crowns to the father of the dead man.

And to this end, he and his wife with him, went up to Paris in disguise. And she, perceiving him closeted for a long while with the enchanter Gallery, and not being told the reason of this, on one morning played the spy and saw Gallery showing to him five wooden images,[2] of which three had their hands hanging down,

intimacy that followed on the Field of the Cloth of Gold, many French nobles (among others François de Bourdeilles, the Simontault who tells this tale) visited the Court of London. In that moment of *rapprochement*, Francis would be inclined to favour any request of Henry VIII.; but from the end of 1522 until the summer of 1525, suspicion and hostility divided France from England. The date of 1526 given by M. Le Roux de Lincy, is certainly one of intimate confidence between the French and English Courts; but at that time the Duke of Alençon was dead, and beyond the necromancy of the deftest wizard.

[1] France was still less an organized monarchy than a confederacy of many petty sovereigns. Every great noble had power of life and death in his dominions. In the XXXIIIrd Novel, the Court of Angoulême adjudges a priest and his sister to the flames. Here as we see, the King of France avows himself powerless in Alençon.

[2] Throughout the entire course of the XVIth century in France, the dread and fear of witches remains a constant symptom. In 1572, according to the "Journal de Henry III.," there were 30,000 sorcerers in Paris.

and of the two others the hands were raised. And she heard the wizard: "We must have images made of wax like these, and they that have the hands drooping shall be made in the likeness of those that are to die, but they that have the hands uplifted shall be made in the likeness of those whose love and favour we desire." To whom the proctor: "This one shall be for the King whose grace I would gain, and this for my Lord Brinon,[1] the chancellor of Alençon." And Gallery said to him, "We must lay these images beneath the altar, where they may hear mass, together with the words that you shall presently say after me." And speaking of them that had the drooping arms, the proctor said that one should be Master Gilles du Mesnil, father of him who was murdered, for he knew well that as long as he was alive he would not cease from pursuing him. And another, that was made in the likeness of a woman, should be for my lady the Duchess of Alençon, the sister of the King; since so well did she love Du Mesnil, her old servant, and had so great a knowledge of the proctor's wickedness in other matters, that unless she died, he could not live. And the last image, that was also made in the likeness of a woman, should be his wife, since she was the beginning of all his evil hap, and he knew well that she would never amend the wickedness of her ways. But when this wife

From time to time one was burned; but a trade so productive of gold and power was not easily abandoned. In 1589, after the murder of the Guises, the people of Paris placed on the altars of their churches waxen models of the King, and they planted these images with knives and daggers.

[1] Jean Brinon was the first President of the Parliament at Rouen. The Bourgeois of Paris records of him: "He was a most honourable man, a good judge, and much esteemed for his science and his churchmanship." A few years later, it became difficult to reconcile these two aims.

of his, who saw through a chink in the door all that was done, heard that she was numbered among the dead, it was her humour to send her husband on before her. And pretending to go and borrow money of an uncle of hers, named Neaufle, Master of Requests to the Duke of Alençon, she told him of her husband, and all that she had seen and heard him do. This Neaufle aforesaid, like a good old servant, went forthwith to the chancellor of the Duchy of Alençon, and showed him the whole of the matter. And since the Duke and Duchess chanced not to be at court on that day, the chancellor went and told this strange case to the Regent, mother of the King and of the Duchess,[1] who straightway sought out La Barre, Provost of Paris;[2] and such good diligence did he make that he clapped up the proctor and his wizard Gallery, who confessed freely the crime, without being put to the question,[3] or in any way constrained. And the matter of their accusation was made out and brought to the King, whereupon some, willing to save the lives of these men, would fain persuade him that by their

[1] The Regent-Mother. It is difficult to reconcile the dates of this novel. Louisa of Savoy was Regent in 1515, and again in the end of 1523. Charles, Duke of Alençon, died on the 11th April 1525; and at this time France and England were enemies, though immediately after the Battle of Pavia, the tide of English politics began to turn to France.

[2] Jean de La Barre was never Provost of Paris during the life of Charles of Alençon. Bailie of Paris in 1522, he was made prisoner with Francis at Pavia in February 1525; he was raised to the office of Provost in May 1526. It is obvious that, in narrating this story after an interval of many years, Margaret has either forgotten that her husband was already dead at the date of the event, or has credited her mother and La Barre with honours which at that time they did not possess. The latter theory appears more plausible to me.

[3] Torture was, of course, still considered a legitimate means of justice.

enchantments they sought nothing but his grace. But the King, being as tender of his sister's life as of his own,[1] commanded that sentence should be given as if they had attempted his own peculiar person. Nevertheless, the Duchess of Alençon made entreaty for the life of this proctor, and for the doom of death to be changed to some other punishment. So this was granted her, and the proctor, together with the wizard, were sent to the galleys of St Blancart at Marseilles,[2] where they ended their days in captivity, having time wherein to consider their sins, how great they had been. And the wife, when her husband was removed, sinned more wickedly than before, and so died miserably.

"I entreat you, ladies, consider well the evil that cometh of a wicked woman, and how many mishaps proceeded from the sin of this one I have told you of. You will find that from the time Eve made Adam to sin, all women have been for the torturing, killing, and damnation of men. As for me, such an experience have I of their cruelty that I am well assured that

[1] In fact a few years later (in the affair of Beda and the accusation of heresy which that fanatic 'Varsity Professor brought against the modern-minded Queen of Navarre), Francis showed himself more stern in condemning the calumniators of his sister than his own. Between the brother, mother, and sister there existed a quite peculiar affection. "Scrivere a Luisa di Savoia," said Cardinal Bibliena, with the witty impiety of the Italian churchman. "Scrivere a Luisa di Savoiaè come scrivere alla Stessa Trinità." Margaret liked and adopted this phrase, and her poems abound with references to this terrestrial Trinity of Francis, Louisa, and herself.

[2] Bernard d'Ormezan, Baron de St Blancart, was Admiral of the Levantine seas, Conservator of the Port of Aigues-Mortes, and in 1521, General of the King's galleys. It was he who in 1525 conveyed Margaret to Spain. In that year the great importance of a good French fleet in the Mediterranean, caused thirteen new galleys to be built in Marseilles. Four of these were for the service of St Blancart.

when I meet with death and damnation, it will be through despair of her whom I love. Yet so besotted am I, that I must needs confess that this hell delights me more coming from her hand than would heaven from the hand of another." Parlamente, feigning not to understand that it was of her that he made this discourse, said to him: "Since this hell of yours is as pleasant as you say, it skills not to fear the devil who sends it." But wrathfully he replied to her: "If my devil should become visible as black as it has made me unhappy, this company would be struck with as great fear as my delight is in regarding it, but the fire of my love makes me to forget the fire of my hell. So to speak no more of this matter, I will give my vote to Mistress Oisille to tell the second novel, and sure am I, that if she would tell that she knows of women, she would be of my opinion." Instantly the company turned toward her, praying her to make a beginning. To this she agreed, and smiling began thus:

"It seems to me, ladies, that he who has given his vote to me has made such an ill report of women by this true story of a woman who was exceedingly wicked, that I shall have to call to mind all these old years of mine, to find one woman whose virtue shall give the lie to his judgment. And since there is come into my mind the recollection of a woman well worthy of being had in everlasting remembrance, I will tell you her history."

## NOVEL II.

*The Wife of a Muleteer had rather Death than Dishonour.*

In the town of Amboise there was a muleteer who served the Queen of Navarre, sister to Francis the First. And she being at Blois[1] brought to bed of a son, this muleteer went thither to be paid such monies as were owing to him, and his wife stayed at Amboise, being lodged in a house beyond the bridge. Now there was a servant of her husband who had for a long while loved her so greatly, that one day he must needs speak his mind to her. But she, being a woman of true virtuousness, so sharply reproved him, threatening that he should be beaten and sent away, that never after did he dare to address her. But he secretly kept the fire of lust in his heart, until one day when his master was abroad, and his mistress at evensong in the castle church of St Florentin, no short distance from her house. So, since she was living alone, he conceived the humour of taking by force that which he could obtain by none of his prayers or good offices, to which end he broke the boards that were between his room and that of his mistress. And this was not perceived when she, having with her a wench of eleven or twelve years, came to her room, by reason of the curtains that were hung by the master's bed on one side, and the servant's on the other. And when the poor woman was in her first sleep, the fellow came in by the hole he

[1] In the year 1530. This was Margaret's only son, the little Prince Jean de Viane. In the same year he died at Alençon, when Margaret, in the mood of exalted resignation with which she ever confronted sorrow, caused great placards to be set on all the walls of Alençon, bearing the text: "God has given, and God has taken away."

had made, clad only in his shirt, and with a drawn sword in his hand. And he whose love was but beastly lust, better able to understand the braying of his mules than fair conclusions, showed himself more brutal than the brutes he had a long while tended; for seeing that so swiftly did she chase round a table that he could not take her, and that she had twice escaped from his very hands, he struck her with his sword, hoping to gain from pain and weakness what he had not gained from fear. Yet it had a contrary effect, for like a good soldier who, when he sees his blood flowing, is stirred up all the more to be avenged on his enemies, and gain for himself glory, so her chaste heart made her fly yet more swiftly from the hands of this wretch, making still more earnest entreaty to him, if haply he might see the wickedness of his purpose. But in such furious case was he, that to nothing of this would he give ear, and aimed at her more and more blows, to avoid which she still kept running as fast as she was able. And when, by reason of loss of blood, she felt death to be near at hand, she raised her eyes to heaven, and with clasped hands gave thanks to God, calling upon Him as her strength, her virtuousness, her long-suffering, and her purity; beseeching Him to favourably accept that blood of hers which she had poured forth for the sake of His Son, by whom she steadfastly believed all her sins were blotted out from His sight. And "Lord receive my soul," she said, "which by thy loving-kindness hath been redeemed," and fell on her face to the floor, where this villain gave her several strokes, and her tongue having lost speech and her body strength, he took that from her which she was no more able to defend against him.

And afterwards he fled forth in such hot haste that all pursuit was of no avail, for he was never found. The young maid who had been sleeping with the muleteer's wife had, for the fear she was in, hidden under the bed, but when she saw that the man was departed, she went to her mistress, and finding in her no speech or movement, called from the window to the neighbours to bring help. They, holding her in as good love and repute as any woman in the town, came presently to her, bringing with them chirurgeons, who made out that she had on her body five-and-twenty mortal wounds. All the aid they could give her was of no avail, and yet for more than an hour she languished on, showing by the signs she made with her eyes and hands, that she knew what was passing. Being asked by the priest in what faith she died, she gave answer by signs as plain as words, that she put the hope of her salvation in Jesus only;[1] and so with glad countenance, and eyes lifted up to heaven, she gave up her soul and body to the Creator. And when she was being taken out for burial, the company thereto appointed attending, her poor husband came up, and saw the body of his wife in front of his house before tidings had been brought to him that she was dead. And the manner of her death being reported to

[1] It was for such a phrase as this, "in Jesus only," repeated in the devotional poem "Le Myrouer de l'Ame Pêcheresse," published at Alençon in 1530, that, inspired by Béda, the Doctors of the Sorbonne accused Queen Margaret of heresy. They declared that the expression "salvation in Jesus only," denied by implication the intercession of the Saints and Mary. The moment was critical; for heresy in 1530 was an unpopular crime. But King Francis, indignant at the impertinence of these fanatic pedants, made them eat their words, and sent the fiery Béda to cool his zeal in the oozy dungeons of Mont St Michel. Thus, by a sudden turn, we behold the Inquisitor as martyr—for (whether of rage or rheumatism) in prison Béda died.

him, he had then a double cause for lamentation, which he made in such grievous sort that he was well-nigh amort. So was this martyr of chastity buried in the church of St Florentin, and at the burial of her all the honourable women of the town failed not to do her honour by their presence; thinking it no small thing to live in a place which had contained so virtuous a woman. And, moreover, such women as were queans determined to live henceforth in amendment of life.

"Behold then, ladies, a true relation, by the consideration of which we should be enabled to guard yet more straitly this excellent virtue of chastity. And we, being of gentle blood, should die with shame on feeling in our hearts that worldly lust, to avoid which the wife of a poor muleteer did not shrink from a cruel death. And let not any one esteem herself a virtuous woman who has not like this one resisted unto death. Wherefore we must humble ourselves, for God giveth not His grace to men for that they are of gentle blood and have great riches, but only according to His good will. For He is no regarder of persons, but chooseth whom He will, and him, whom He hath chosen, He filleth with all goodness. And often He chooseth the lowly, that He may confound those that are in great esteem with this world, according as it is written, 'Let us not rejoice for our merits, but rather that our names are written in the book of life.'"

Not one lady was there in that company who did not weep for the pitiful and glorious death of this woman; each one resolving within herself that, if like case were to come to her she would strive likewise to gain martyrdom.

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But Dagoucin, who hitherto had kept silence, fell to the praise of good women, and wondered that any man possessing one should desert her (as, none the less, it often happens), for fickleness is well worthy of blame. Simontault said to this: "But what do you say as to those who have not found their other half? Call you it fickleness to seek every quarter, if haply they may find it?" "Ay, verily I do, and for this reason—that man knoweth not where to look for this other half, with whom there is such perfect union that the one differs not from the other. Wherefore love should be steadfastly fixed, and in whatever hap, change not its heart or inclination, for if she whom you love is like to yourself, so that there is but one will between you, then it is yourself you love and not her." "Dagoucin," said Hircan, "this position of yours is false, as if we should bear love to women by whom we are not beloved." "My intent is," answered Dagoucin, "to maintain that when love is founded merely upon the beauty, gracious ways, or wealth of a woman, and our aim be only pleasure, honour, or profit, that love will not long endure. For, when that upon which we found our love becomes wanting, the love itself perishes. But I am steadfast in my opinion, that he who loves, and desires nothing better than to love with a perfect love, will cling to this love while his soul clings to his body." "Pardy," said Simontault, "I cannot believe that you have ever been in love, for if you had felt this fire like other men, you would not treat us in this fashion with a Republic like Plato's, that has life only on paper." "Not so," said Dagoucin, "I have loved, do still love, and while I live, will love. But I have so great a fear lest, when I make manifest this love, I thereby do

injustice to its perfection, that I conceal it even from her of whom I desire a like return. Hardly indeed do I suffer it to enter my thoughts, lest my eyes make revelation of it, for so much the more that I keep this fire hidden out of sight, so the more earnestly do I delight to know that it is perfect and without stain." "Yet," said Geburon, "I am well assured that to be loved in return would not be to your misliking." "This I acknowledge, but since my love is not lessened for that it is not returned, so it would not be increased if it were returned." Whereupon Parlamente, who held this fantasy in small favour, said: "Take care, Dagoucin, for I have seen others beside you who had rather die than speak." "These, mistress," answered Dagoucin, "I deem exceeding happy." "Even so," said Saffradent, "and well deserving a place among the Innocents, of whom the church sings: *Non loquendo, sed moriendo confessi sunt.* I have heard much of these feeble lovers, but never yet stood I at the deathbed of one of them. And since I have come scot-free from all my dolors, I believe not that another man will die of such woes." "How then," said Dagoucin, "do you expect to be loved? But lovers of your sort need never fear death. Yet have I known many an one to whom death came by no sickness but love." "Since you are advised of such," said Longarine, "I give you my vote for the telling some pleasant story that shall be the ninth novel." "To the intent," he replied, "that your faith may be confirmed by signs and miracles, I will tell you an authentic history, which came to pass not three years ago."

## NOVEL IX.

*A relation of a perfect Love, and the pitiful end thereof.*

In the coasts of Dauphiné and Provence there lived a gentleman whose riches stood rather in virtuousness, a brave address, and an honourable heart, than in gold or worldly gear. And he loved a maid, as to whose name I will say nothing, since she came of a most illustrious house; but be you none the less assured that my tale is the whole truth. And since he came not of such gentle blood as she, he was unwilling to declare his love to her, since his affection was so perfect that he would rather die than cause her any dishonour. So perceiving that, compared with her, he was of low estate, he had no hope of marrying her. Wherefore his love was founded upon this and this alone—to love her with all his whole might; and this he did, and for so long a time that at last she was advised thereof. And seeing that the love he bore her was honourable, and bore fruit in seemly and virtuous talk, she was well pleased to be loved by such an one, and carried herself so graciously toward him that he, who hoped for nothing better, was well contented therein. But malice, that suffers no one of us to be at rest, could not leave this goodly manner of living in peace, for certain ones must needs go tell the mother that it was matter of astonishment to them that this gentleman was made of such account in her house, that it was common talk that the daughter brought him there, and that she had often been seen to talk with him. The mother, who had no more doubt as to this gentleman's honour than that of her own children, was much troubled to hear his presence

was taken in bad part, so that at last, fearing the scandalous tongues of men, she entreated him that for some while he would come no more to her house as his custom had been. And this he found tough matter of digestion, knowing that the honest talk he had with the maid deserved not this estrangement. All the same, to shut evil mouths, he kept away for some time, till the rumour was hushed, and then went as before, his love being in no wise lessened by absence. But one day, being in the house, he heard some talk of marrying his mistress to a gentleman who was not so rich as to rightly carry this point over him. So he forthwith took heart, and began to use his friends' offices on his behalf, thinking that if the lady had to choose he would be preferred. But the mother and kinsfolk chose the other man, because he had the greater wealth, at which the poor gentleman took so much despair, knowing his sweetheart to be as much grieved as himself, that little by little, without any sickness, he began to consume away, and in a short time was so much changed that he seemed to have covered the beauty of his face with the mask of death, whither hour by hour he was joyously hastening.

Yet he could not restrain himself from going to speak as often as might be with her he loved so well. But at last, since his strength failed him, he was constrained to keep to his bed, not wishing his mistress to be advertised of this lest she too should have part in his woe. And giving himself up to melancholy and despair, he left off both drinking and eating, sleep and rest, in such sort that for the wasting away of his countenance he could scarcely be known. And some one

bringing tidings of this to the mother of the maid, she, being a woman full of charity, and liking the gentleman in such fashion that if the kinsfolk had been of her and her daughter's mind, she would have been better pleased with his honest heart than all the riches of another, went to see this unfortunate, whom she found more dead than alive. And perceiving that his end drew near, he had that morning made confession of his sins, and received the blessed sacrament, thinking to die without the sight of any one. But though he was within a span of death, when he saw her enter who was for him the resurrection and the life, he was so much revived that, starting up from his bed, he said to the mother: "What has brought you here, mistress, to visit him who has one foot in the grave, and of whose death you are the cause?" "How can it be," she said, "that you receive death from our hands, who love you so well? I pray you tell me wherefore you hold this manner of discourse." "Mistress," said he, "although I have, as far as lay within me, concealed the love I bore your daughter, yet my kinsfolk in speaking of our marriage have made too evident my thoughts. Hence I have lost hope, not on account of my pleasure, but because I know that at the hands of no other man will she receive as good love and contentment. Her loss of the best and most affectionate friend she has in the world does me more hurt than the loss of my life, which for her sake alone I was fain to preserve. But since it can now no more avail her anything, the loss of it is to me great gain." At this discourse the mother and daughter laboured to console him, the mother saying: "Take heart, my friend, for if it please God to give you back your health, I promise you my daughter

shall be your wife. See! she is here, and I command her also to make this promise to you." And the daughter, with much weeping, laboured to assure him of that her mother promised. But he, well knowing that if he recovered his health, he could not have her to wife, and that all this pleasant talk of theirs was only in some sort to revive him, answered them that if they had said all this three months ago he would be the stoutest and the most happy of all the gentlemen in France, but that help had come too late to him, for whom hope was no more. And when he saw that they still laboured to persuade him he spoke as follows: "Since you, on account of my feeble case, promise to me that which, even if you would have it so, can never pertain to me, I ask you to grant me somewhat less, which I have never had the boldness to require at your hands." Straightway they promised, and confirmed their promise with an oath, whereupon he said: "I beseech you that you place her whom you pledge me for a wife between my arms, and bid her kiss me." The maid, not accustomed to such behaviour, made some difficulty, but her mother straightly charged her, seeing that the gentleman was rather to be counted among the dead than the living, and she went up to the bed of the sick man, saying to him: "Sweetheart, I pray thee be of good cheer." Then this poor soul stretched out his arms, all skin and bone, as well as he could, and kissed with a fervent kiss the cause of his death, and holding her to his cold and bloodless mouth kept her there as long as he could. And furthermore he spoke to her: "The love I have had towards you hath been so seemly and honest that I have never desired more bliss of you than that I now possess, by which, and with

which I gladly commend my soul to God, who is perfect Love, who knoweth my soul that it is great, and my love that it is without stain. And now, since within my arms I hold my desire, I entreat Him in His arms to take my soul." And at this he pressed her between his arms with such good will that his enfeebled heart was not able to bear it, and was voided of all its radical humours, which joy had so used that his soul fled her seat and returned to her Creator. And though the poor body had lain a long while without life, and was therefore unable any more to hold fast its treasure, the love which the maiden had always kept concealed was now made so manifest that her mother and the servants had much ado to draw them apart; but by force they took at last the living-dead from the dead, for whom they made honourable burial. And of this the crowning point was in the weeping and lamentations of that poor maid, who in like measure, as she had kept her secret while her lover was yet alive, so made it manifest when he was dead, as if in some part to make satisfaction for the wrong she had done him. And notwithstanding that they gave her a husband for her contentment, never more, so the story goes, did she take any pleasure in her life.

"Do you not agree, gentlemen, though you would not before believe me, that this example suffices to prove that perfect love may bring men to death, if it be too much hidden from view? There is none amongst you who does not know the kinsfolk on both sides, wherefore there is no room for you to doubt that it is the truth." At this the ladies with one consent fell to weeping, but Hircan said to them: "Verily he was the greatest fool of whom I have ever heard. Is it accord-

ing to reason, prithee, that we should die for women, who are made but for us? or that we should be afraid to require of them what God has commanded them to give us? I speak not for myself or married men, but my words are for those whom I account fools to be afraid of those who should be afraid of them. And do you not mark how great was this maiden's regret for her folly? Since, if she would cling to the body of a dead man—a thing against nature—how much the more would she have clung to him when alive, had he had courage to entreat her love." "All the same," said Oisille, "the gentleman most plainly displayed how honourable a love he had towards her, and for this he is worthy to be had in everlasting remembrance, for to find chastity in an enamoured heart, this, indeed, is mighty rare." "Mistress," said Saffredent, "to confirm the opinion of Hircan, which is likewise mine, I would have you believe that fortune favours the daring, and that there is no man beloved by woman who, if he do his courting with wisdom and gracious ways, will not attain at last to the desire of his heart." "I am astonished," said Parlamente, "that you two dare hold such discourse. The ladies you have loved owe you but little thanks, or you have done your service in so bad a quarter that you think all women are like these queans of yours." "I," replied Saffredent, "have the misfortune not to be able to boast of any great success; but I lay my bad luck less to the virtue of the ladies than to my own lack of wisdom and forethought in going about the matter, and to this intent will put, in the words of the old woman in the *Romance of the Rose:* 'We are all made, fair sirs, for one another; every woman for every man, and every man for every woman.' Where-

fore I cannot believe but that, when love is once in session on a woman's heart, her lover will bring matters to a good conclusion, if he be not plainly a blockhead." Parlamente said: "But if I could name a woman, strongly beloved, strongly importuned, and strongly pressed, and all the while an honest woman, victorious over her self, her love, and her lover, would you not believe it for the truth that it is?" "Why, yes," said he. "Then indeed, said Parlamente, "you would be hard of faith and slow to believe if you were not won by an example I could give you." Dagoucin said to her: "Mistress, since I have shown, by an example, how a virtuous man loved even unto death, I beseech you, if you know any such relation as to woman, to tell it and so bring to a close this day's entertainment, and fear not to speak somewhat at length, for there yet remains abundance of time to discourse many a pleasant case." "Since then," said Parlamente, "I am to bring a close to the day, I will not make a long beginning to my story, for so fine a history have I to relate that I am fain you as well as I should know it. And though my eyes have informed me nothing concerning it, I was told it by one of my most familiar friends to the praise of the man who had of all the world loved most. And he enjoined me that, if I ever told it, I should change the name of the persons therein; so that it is, excepting names and places, the whole truth and nothing else."

## NOVEL X.

*Florida, hard pressed by her lover, virtuously resists him, and on his death takes the veil.*

In the county of Aranda, in Aragon, there lived a lady who, while yet in her first youth, was left a widow by the Count of Aranda, with a son and a daughter, the daughter's name being Florida. This lady aforesaid laboured to bring up her children in all virtuousness of living as appertains to those of gentle blood, and in such sort that her household was commonly accounted one of the most honourable in all the coasts of Spain. She often went to Toledo, where the King held his court, and when she came to Saragossa, which was not far from her house, she would tarry a long while with the Queen and the Court, amongst whom she was held in the highest honour. On one day going, as her manner was, to stand in the presence of the King in his castle of Jasserye, near Saragossa, she passed through a village pertaining to the Viceroy of Catalonia, who was not used to stir beyond the coasts of Perpignan, for the great wars between the Kings of France and Spain.[1] But it so fell out that at this time

[1] Notwithstanding the pomp and circumstance of History which adorns this novel, M. le Roux de Lincy, mindful of this phrase, "I have changed the names and places," suggests that this adventure happened at the Court of Louisa of Savoy, left a widow in her first youth, by the death of the Count of Angoulême. In this case, Florida would be Margaret herself, (although she asserts she was not an eye-witness). If we adopt M. le Roux's suggestion, as I am inclined to do, it appears obvious to me that the Duke of Cardona is Charles of Alençon, and the King of the Moors, Charles V., and Amadour, "a younger son with no inheritance," cherishing a hopeless love for Margaret — Amadour, perhaps, may stand for Bonnivet or Montmorency, or possibly for Guiliano dei Medici, Duke of

there was peace, wherefore the Viceroy and all his captains had come to do their suit and service to the King. And the Viceroy, being advised that the Countess of Aranda passed through his domain, went to meet her both for the ancient friendship that was between them and to do her honour as a kinswoman of the King. Now he had in his company many honourable gentlemen, who by the long continuance of the wars had gained so much glory and good report that anyone who could see them and resort to them counted himself happy on that account. And amongst the rest was one named Amadour, who, although he was but eighteen or nineteen years of age, had so well-assured a grace, and so good an understanding, that he would have been chosen out from a thousand as worthy the office of a governor. True it is that this good understanding was conjoined with such beauty that no eye could refrain from looking on him, and though this beauty was of so excellent a kind, yet it was hard pressed by his manner of speaking; so that men knew not where to bestow the palm, to his grace, his beauty, or the words of his mouth. But that for which he was most of all esteemed was his surpassing bravery, notwithstanding he was so young, for in so many places had he shown the strength of his arm that not only in all the coasts of Spain, but also in France and Italy, his virtues were held in great account, and with good reason, since in no fight did he spare himself; and when his own country was at peace

Nemours, who married Philiberte de Savoie, the young aunt and intimate friend of Margaret. Still he remains an uncertain figure. Florida, however, at Cardona, in the company of her unloveable husband, and the old Duchess, with her maxims and her patience, might stand for Margaret in her dreary youth at Alençon, "living a life scarce better than death."

he would seek for wars in foreign lands, where likewise he was beloved as well by enemies as friends.

This gentleman, for the love he bore his general, came with him to his domain, whither the Countess of Aranda was arrived; and as he looked upon the beauty and grace of her daughter Florida, then about twelve years old, he thought within himself that she was the sweetest he had ever beheld, and that could he gain her favour it would do him more pleasure than anything whatsoever he might win from another woman. And after for a long while fixing his regard upon her, he resolved to give her his love, although reason made plain to him that he desired impossible things, as much for that she was of a most noble house as for her tender years, which as yet were not fit to listen to the discourse he was fain to make to her. But against this fear he strengthened himself with hope, promising himself that time and patience would bring a happy issue to his undertaking, and from henceforth the great love that was entered into his heart assured him of means of attaining thereto. And to surpass the greatest difficulty of all, that was the remoteness of his own land, and his few opportunities of seeing Florida, he was resolved to marry, contrary to what he had determined while he was with the dames of Barcelona and Perpignan, where he was held in such account that few or none would have refused him. And so long had he tarried in these coasts, by reason of the wars, that his speech smacked rather of Catalonia than Castille, although he was born near Toledo of a wealthy and honourable house, but being a younger son, he had no inheritance. So, perchance, it came to pass that Love and Fortune, seeing him abandoned of his kinsfolk, determined to make a

masterpiece of him, and by means of his virtuousness and courage granted him what he could not obtain from the laws of his country. Such good skill had he in the craft of war, and so well-beloved was he by lords and princes, that he more frequently refused their employ than asked for it.

The Countess then has come to Saragossa, and has been graciously received by the King and his Court. The Viceroy of Catalonia often came to visit her, and Amadour never failed to accompany him, only that he might have the delight of looking upon Florida, for of speaking to her he had no opportunity. So to make himself known in such good company he addressed himself to the daughter of an old knight, his neighbour, whose name was Aventurada, and who had such converse with Florida that she knew what was in the depths of her heart. Amadour, whether for the graciousness he found in her, or for the three thousand ducats a-year that was her dowry, determined to talk to her as one he desired to marry. And willingly did she give ear to him, but seeing that he was poor and her father rich, she thought that he would never give her in marriage to Amadour unless by the entreaty of the Countess of Aranda. Wherefore she addressed herself to Florida, saying: "You have seen that young gentleman of Castille often speaking with me, and I am persuaded that his intent is to ask me in marriage. You know too what kind of father I have, and that he will never consent thereto, if he be not strongly entreated of the Countess and yourself." Florida, who loved her as herself, promised that she would lay this to heart as if it were for her own peculiar good; and Aventurada accomplished so much as to present Amadour to her,

who on kissing of her hand was like to have swooned away for joy. And he, who was accounted the readiest speaker in all Spain, was so affected in her presence that he stood dumb; and this was matter of great surprise to her, who, although she was but twelve years old, had well understood that no man in Spain could say what he wished more readily or with a better grace. So seeing that he said nothing, she began thus: "The renown that you have won, my lord, in all the coasts of Spain is so great as to make you well known in this Court, and causes those who are of your acquaintance to desire to employ themselves in your service; wherefore, if there is anything wherein I can aid you, I am at your command." Amadour fixing his eyes upon her beauty was thereby possessed with such a ravishment, that he could hardly find words to give her his hearty thanks, whereupon Florida, astonished to find him thus dumb, but putting it down to some fantasy and not to the power of love, went from his presence without another word.

Amadour, perceiving the goodness which even in early youth began to show itself in Florida, said to her whom he intended for his wife: "Marvel not that in the presence of Mistress Florida I lost all power of speech, since the virtues and the wisdom which are contained in one of so few years in such wise astonished me that I knew not what to say. But, prithee, tell me, Aventurada, who know all her secrets, whether every heart at Court is not in love with her, for verily they who know her and love her not are either hard as rocks or senseless as beasts." Aventurada, who by this time loved Amadour better than all the men in the world, would not conceal aught from him, and so told him that

Florida was beloved of all, but by the custom of the land few spoke to her, and still fewer—nay, only two—paid any court towards her. And these two were Spanish Princes, of whom one was the son of the Fortunate Infante, the other the young Duke of Cardona. "Prithee, then, tell me which she loves best." "She is so prudent," said Aventurada, "that she would never confess to having any will besides her mother's in the matter; natheless, as far as my wit goes, I am persuaded she loves the son of the Fortunate Infante above the Duke of Cardona. But to her mother Cardona is most agreeable, since in the case of their being wed she would have her daughter always by her. And of such good judgment do I esteem you that this very day, if it is your pleasure, you may come to a conclusion, for the son of the Fortunate Infante[1] is being nurtured in this Court, and is one of the bravest and most admirable young princes in Christendom. And if we maids had the disposing of the matter, he would be well assured of his bride, and we should have the fairest couple in all Spain. You must understand that, although they are both young, she twelve and he but fifteen, it is already three years since the courtship began, and if you would have her favour, I would counsel you to make yourself his faithful friend and follower."

Amadour was in great delight to hear she was in love with something, hoping that in time he might gain the place, not of husband but of lover, for it was not her virtue that he feared, but lest she should have no love whatever in her temperament. And soon after these pas-

[1] The Fortunate Infante, Henry of Arragon, left no legitimate children, and this again seems to point out that this parade of History is merely a disguise.

sages he began to be constantly in company with the son of the Fortunate Infante, whose good graces he easily obtained, for in whatsoever pastime the young prince took delight he was well skilled, and above all in the practice of horsemanship, and in sword play, and to be short, in all the games which it is becoming in a prince to know. But war broke out in Languedoc, and needs must that Amadour return with the governor, which indeed was great grief to him, since it took away the possibility of his seeing Florida; wherefore on his setting out he told a brother of his, who was chamberlain to the King, of the good match he had made in the person of Aventurada, and prayed him that in his absence he would do all that lay within him to forward the marriage, thereto employing the favour he had with the King and Queen and all his friends. The gentleman, who loved his brother not only for his kinsmanship but also for his excellent endowments, promised him to use his best endeavours, and moreover did so, inasmuch as the father, a surly old miser, laid by his natural complexion and paid some regard to the virtues of Amadour, which the Countess of Aranda, and above all Mistress Florida, took care to set before him. Also in this they were aided by the young Count of Aranda, who as he grew in years began to esteem brave men. So the marriage having been agreed upon by the kinsfolk on either side, the King's chamberlain sent for his brother, since a lasting truce had been made between the two kings.

About this time the King of Spain betook himself to Madrid to avoid the malaria prevailing where he was, and at the advice of his Privy Council, and the request of the Countess of Aranda, he gave consent to the

marriage of the Duchess of Medina-Celi with the young Count of Aranda,[1] no less for their contentment and the union of their houses than for the love he bore towards the Countess; and so was pleased that the marriage should be solemnised in his castle at Madrid. And at the marriage feast was present Amadour, who used such good means on his own account that he was wedded to the lady whose love for him was beyond compare greater than his for her. But to be short, he held his wife only as a cloak to conceal his liking for another, and a means whereby he might be incessantly in Florida's company. After that he was married he entered into all the privity of the Countess of Aranda's household, where they paid no more heed to him than if he had been a woman. And though at this time he had not seen more than twenty-two years, yet so sage was he that the Countess would make known to him all her occasions, and enjoined her son to discourse with him and give ear to all his counsels. And having attained this high point in their esteem, he kept himself so prudently and coldly that even she whom he loved knew nothing of his thoughts. But since Florida loved his wife above all others, she trusted in him in such sort that she concealed from him nothing, and at this time opened to him all the love she had for the Fortunate Infante. So he, who sought but one thing, to gain her altogether for himself, talked to her always of the prince, for it mattered not one whit to him what the subject of their discourse might be so that it lasted a long time. There he stayed for a month after his marriage was concluded, and was then forced to go to the wars, whither he remained two years without returning to see

[1] The marriage of Francis of Angoulême and Claude of France, 1507?

his wife. And she lived all this while in the place where her nurture had been.

And during these two years he wrote often to his wife; but his letters consisted for the most part of messages to Florida, who on her side failed not to return them, and in every letter of Aventurada's sent him some pleasant piece of wit, and this made the husband unfailing in his writing. But with all this Florida discovered nothing save that he loved her as if he had been a brother. Now and again he would come home, but in such sort that in five years he only saw Florida for two months altogether; yet in despite of estrangement and the length of his absence his love did but increase. And it came to pass that he made a journey to see his wife, and found the Countess far removed from the Court, for the King was gone to Andalusia, bearing with him the young Count of Aranda, who was now beginning to carry arms. The Countess had betaken herself to her pleasure-house on the coasts of Aragon and Navarre, and was glad to see Amadour return, since for nigh three years he had been away. He was made welcome by all, and the Countess enjoined that he should be used as if he had been her own son. While he was with her she advertised him of all the charges of the household, and for the most part took his judgment thereon, and so great esteem did he win at this place, that whithersoever he would go the door was opened to him, since they made such account of his prudence that he was trusted like an angel or a holy man. Florida, for the love she bore his wife and himself, sought him out wherever he went, and had no suspicion of him, wherefore she put no guard on her face, having no love to conceal, but only feeling great contentment

when he was by her. Amadour was in great pains to escape the suspicion of those who can discern a lover from a friend, for when Florida came quietly to speak to him, the flame that was in his heart rose so high that he could not hinder the colour rising on his cheeks or conceal the flashing of his eyes. And to the end that nobody might observe all this, he set himself to pay court to a mighty fine lady named Pauline, who, in her time, had such renown from her beauty that few who saw her escaped her nets. And this Pauline, hearing that Amadour had had some experience of the love-craft in Barcelona and Perpignan, and had gained the affection of the handsomest gentlewomen in the country, notably that of the Countess of Palamos, who was accounted for the most beautiful of all the Spanish ladies, told him that it was a great pity, after such good fortune, to have taken to wife so ugly a woman. But Amadour, understanding by her words that she had a mind to help him in his hour of need, made as pleasant discourse to her as might be, thinking that, if he could cause her to believe what was false, he should thereby hide from her the truth. But she, of keen wit, well tried in the service of love, was not to be contented with words alone, and being assured that such kindness as he had for her did not suffice him, suspected he would fain use her as a cloak, and on that account kept good watch on his eyes. But these knew so well how to feign, that any suspicion she might conceive was but dark and obscure, yet it was matter of great toil to the gentleman, since Florida, ignorant of all these plottings, used him in such familiar fashion before Pauline that his eyes had a wondrous struggle with his heart. And for the avoiding of this, one day he spoke as follows

to Florida, while they were standing by a window: "Prithee, sweetheart, tell me whether is it better to speak or to die?" And Florida presently replied to him: "I would counsel all such as are my friends to speak and not die, for 'tis a bad speech that cannot be mended, but a life lost cannot be recalled." "You promise me then," said Amadour, "that you will not only take in good part what I am going to say, but even that you will not be astonished thereat till I have made an end." To this she replied: "Say what you will, for if you astonish me, none can reassure me." And so he began: "Mistress, up to this time I have had no wish to speak of my love towards you, and this for two reasons. In the first place, because I desired to be well tried by you, and in the second, because I doubted whether you would esteem it for an honour to be loved by me, who am but a poor gentleman. And again, though I were of as high estate as yourself, the steadfastness of your heart would not allow you to listen to love-talk from any but him who has gained your love, I would say the son of the Fortunate Infante. But just as in war, necessity makes men sacrifice their own possessions, and cut down their own corn lest the enemy enjoy it, so I dare to risk gathering beforehand the fruit I hoped to pluck much later, lest it profit our enemies and be to your loss. Understand then that from your youth until now I have been so given up to your service that I have never wearied in seeking to gain your favour, and for that cause alone did I wed her whom I thought you loved the best. And knowing the love you bore to the son of the Fortunate Infante, I have taken pains, as you are advised, to do him service and to be frequently with

him, and all this because I fain would please you, and truly I have used to that end all my power. You know that I have gained the favour of your mother and brother, and all whom you love, in such sort that I am held in this house not as a servant but a son, and all the pains that for these five years I have taken have been to no other intent than that with you I may pass all my life. Understand that I am not of those who would pretend by these means to get anything from you to the hurt of your honour, for I know that I cannot take you to wife, and even if I could I would not do this thing against him whom you love, and whom I desire to see your husband. And so far removed am I from those who, by long service, hope for a reward against the honour of their ladies, and love with a vicious love, that I would rather see you dead than know you were less worthy of being loved, or that your virtue had, for my pleasure, been made of small account. For the end and reward of what I have done I ask alone one thing—that you be to me such a mistress as never to take your favour from me, that you continue me in my present case, trusting in me more than in any other, and being well assured that, if in any matter you need a gentleman's life, mine shall be with the heartiest good will at your service. And in like manner I would have you believe that whatever I do that is brave and honourable is done only for your sake. And if I have done for ladies of far less account than you things which have been thought worthy of regard, be assured that, you being my mistress, my bravery will grow in such fashion that deeds I aforetime found impossible shall become most easy to be performed. But if you will not accept me as wholly yours,

it is in my mind to renounce arms, and the valour which helped me not in my hour of need. Wherefore, mistress, I entreat that my desire be granted me, forasmuch as your honour and conscience cannot fairly refuse it."

The maid, hearing this strange discourse, began to change colour and let down her eyelids, as a frightened woman is accustomed. Natheless, since she was wise and prudent, she said to him: "Wherefore is it, Amadour, that you ask of me what you have already? To what intent is all this talk? I greatly fear that beneath your honourable words there is concealed some hidden evil to deceive the ignorance of my youth. Wherefore I am in great doubt what to reply; for if I refuse the honourable friendship you offer me, I shall be doing the very contrary to what I have always done, since I have trusted you above all men. Neither my conscience nor mine honour forbid your desire, nor yet my love for the son of the Fortunate Infante, for that is founded upon marriage, to which you make no pretence. I know nothing to hinder me from replying to you according to your wish, if it be not the fear I have at heart arising from the small need you had to ask all this; for since you have what you require, what need to ask for it?" Amadour, who was not without an answer, said to her: "Mistress, you speak according to wisdom, and do me so great honour by the faith you put in me, that if I were not content with this reward, I should not be worthy of any other. But know that he who would build a house to last for ever must take care first to lay a strong and sure foundation; wherefore I, who would dwell for ever in your service, must take care not only of the means whereby I may always be near you,

but also that none other be advised of my great love towards you. For though it be honourable enough to be proclaimed from the housetops, yet those who cannot discern the hearts of lovers often judge falsely concerning them, and thereby come evil rumours, of which the event is likewise evil. And she who makes me say this and manifest my love towards you is Pauline, who has strong suspicions concerning me, and knowing well in her heart that I do not love her, makes it her chief concern to watch my face. And when you so familiarly come and speak to me before her, I am in great fear lest I make some sign for her to found her suspicion on, and so fall into the pit I am fain to escape. Wherefore it has been my intent to entreat you that before her and before others whom you know to be as malicious as she is, you come not so suddenly to speak to me, for I had rather die than any man should come to a knowledge on these matters. And had I not been so tender of your honour I would not have had this discourse with you, since I deem myself sufficiently happy in your love and confidence towards me, and ask of you nothing more than to continue them unto the end."

Florida, who on hearing this was exceedingly glad, began to feel a somewhat at her heart she had never felt before, and considering the fair conclusions he had laid before her, replied that virtue and honour answered for her, and granted his desire. And who that has loved can be in doubt as to whether Amadour rejoiced thereat? But Florida more straitly followed his counsels than he would have her, for she, being afraid not only in the presence of Pauline but everywhere beside, no longer would seek him out as she had been accus-

tomed; and whilst they were thus estranged she took in bad part his often going to Pauline, whom she thought so pretty that she could not believe but that he loved her. And for the consolation of her sadness she had much talk with Aventurada, who began to be exceeding jealous of her husband and Pauline, and so ofttimes made complaint to Florida, who comforted her as well as might be, she herself being stricken with the same plague. Amadour before long perceiving how Florida was changed towards him, thought that she did not merely follow his counsels, but had mingled with them some peevish imagination of her own devising. And one day, while they were going to evensong at a monastery, he said to her: "Prithee, mistress, what countenance is this you show me?" "I suppose that which pleases you," said she. Whereupon, having a suspicion of the truth, and willing to know if he was right, he began to say: "Mistress, I have so spent my days that Pauline thinks no more of you." To which she replied: "Than this you cannot do better, both for yourself and for me, for in serving your pleasure you preserve my honour." At which Amadour saw that she thought he took pleasure in parley with Pauline, and at this thought waxed so desperate that he could not contain himself, and wrathfully exclaimed: "Truly, mistress, these are early days to begin tormenting your poor slave and pelting him to death with bitter words, for I thought there could be no greater travail than to oblige myself to parley with one for whom I have no love. And since what I have done in your service is taken by you in bad part, I will never again speak to her, come what will of it! And that I may conceal my wrath as well as I have concealed my contentment, I

will begone to some place hardby until your fantasy is overpast. But I have good hopes while I am there to get tidings from my general that will take me back to the wars, where I will stay long enough to let you know that you alone have kept me here." Thus saying, and without waiting for a reply, he forthwith left her. At this Florida was filled with grief and sadness, and love by its repulse began to show her all its strength, in such wise that, knowing the ill she had done him, she wrote again and again to Amadour praying him to return, and this he did after that a space of some days had abated the bitterness of his anger.

I cannot make for you a particular account of the discourse by which they destroyed this jealousy. At all events, he won the battle, inasmuch as she promised him to believe no more that he was in love with Pauline, and also that she was assured that to speak with Pauline or anyone else, save to do her a service, was a martyrdom hardly to be borne.

And when love had conquered this first suspicion, and the two lovers began to take more delight than ever in talking with one another, tidings were brought that the King of Spain was drawing his whole army to Salces. Wherefore Amadour, who was always in the van of battle, lost not this chance of winning for himself glory, yet it is true that he went with a regret that was not his custom as much for the loss of pleasure as fearing to find some change on his return. And this because he knew that Florida was sought in marriage by great princes and lords, seeing she was now come to the age of fifteen or sixteen years,[1] wherefore he thought

[1] Margaret was sixteen in 1508. In March 1509 Francis proclaimed war against Venice.

that if she was married while he was away he would no longer have any opportunity of seeing her, except the Countess of Aranda should give her as a companion his wife Aventurada. And so well did he manage his affairs amongst his friends that the Countess promised that, let her daughter go where she might, his wife should go with her. And though it was intended that Florida should be married in Portugal, yet it was determined that Aventurada should never forsake her; so on this assurance, not without regret unspeakable, Amadour went away and left his wife with the Countess. And when Florida found herself alone after the departure of her slave, she set herself to the doing of good works, whereby she would fain get as much honour and repute as the most perfect women, and show herself worthy of such a lover as Amadour. And he, being arrived at Barcelona, received from the ladies such welcome as he was wont, but so changed did they find him that they would not have believed that marriage had such power over a man as it had over him. For it was plain that the things in which aforetime he had taken delight now wearied him; and the very Countess of Palamos whom he had loved so well could scarce find means to draw him to her lodging, on which account he made but short stay at Barcelona, being weary for the fight and the heat of battle. And when he had come to Salces, there began that great and fierce war between the two kings of which I do not propose to make any relation, not so much of the mighty deeds done by Amadour, for if I did my tale would be long enough to suffice for the entertainment of a whole day. But know that he far excelled in glory each and all of his fellows. And when the Duke

of Nagera came to Perpignan, being captain over two thousand, he entreated Amadour to be his lieutenant, who with his band did such service that in every fight the battle-cry was "*Nagera!*"

At this time it came to pass that the King of Tunis, who for a long while had waged war with the Spaniard, hearing that the Kings of France and Spain were at odds together on the coasts of Perpignan and Narbonne, thought that he could find no better occasion of doing a displeasure to the King of Spain. To this end he dispatched a host of light galleys and other ships to pillage and destroy any badly-guarded place on the coasts of Spain. The men of Barcelona, seeing a great number of vessels passing in front of the town, advertised the viceroy of the matter; and he, who was then at Salces, forthwith sent the Duke of Nagera to Palamos. And the Moors, seeing the place guarded in such sort, feigned to go away, but returned about midnight and sent so many men on shore, that the Duke of Nagera was surprised by the enemy and taken captive. Amadour, who kept good watch, hearing the tumult, drew together as great a company as he was able, and made such defence that the enemy, for all their numbers, were for a long while unable to accomplish anything. But at last, knowing the Duke of Nagera to be taken, and that the Moors were resolved to set Palamos afire, and with it the house he held against them, he preferred to render himself up than to be the cause of destroying the brave men who were of his fellowship. Also he had hopes of being ransomed, and thus once more to see Florida. So he presently gave himself up to a Moor named Dorlin, governor to the King of Tunis. And this man took him to his master, by whom he was

well received and better guarded, for the King, having him in his hands, thought he had taken the Achilles of the Spaniards.

And so abode Amadour nigh two years in the service of the King of Tunis. Now the report of this mischance was brought to Spain, at which the kinsfolk of the Duke of Nagera were sore grieved; but they who laid the honour of their country to heart esteemed the capture of Amadour to be the greater loss. And the news came to the house of the Countess of Aranda, where at this time lay Aventurada grievously sick. The Countess, who had great suspicion of the love Amadour bore her daughter, but suffered it and concealed it for the virtues she discerned in him, called her apart and told her these pitiful tidings. Florida, who knew well how to feign, replied that it was a great loss for the whole house, and above all for his poor wife, who was now in such evil case. But seeing her mother weeping exceedingly, she too let a few tears drop to bear her company, fearing that by feigning too much her deceit might become apparent. And from this time the Countess often spoke to her of him, but could never found her suspicions on anything in Florida's face. I leave untold the pilgrimages, prayers, and fasts which Florida discharged in due order for the safety of Amadour, who no sooner got to Tunis than he sent tidings thereof to his friends, and by a trusty messenger advertised Florida that he was in good health and hope of seeing her again. And this was the poor lady's only means of sustaining her anguish, so doubt not that, since it was permitted him to write to her, she in return did her part so well that her letters of consolation came to Amadour thick and fast.

At this time the Countess was commanded of the King to go to Saragossa, where he was come, and she found there the young Duke of Cardona, who so strongly urged the King and Queen that they prayed the Countess to give him her daughter in marriage. The Countess, who in nothing was disobedient to their will, agreed thereto, thinking that her daughter, who was still young, could have no will in the matter but her own. And when the agreement was determined upon she told her daughter that she had chosen as mate for her one she thought most fitting. And Florida, knowing that when a thing is done it skills not to give advice, said to her that for all things God was to be praised; and seeing her mother bear herself coldly towards her, she had enough to do to obey without much pity of herself. And as matter of consolation for her woes, it was told her that the son of the Fortunate Infante was sick unto death: but neither before her mother nor any beside did she ever make any appearance of grief. Indeed so strongly did she constrain herself that the tears driven inwardly into her heart caused such a flow of blood from the nose that her life was in jeopardy; and that she might be restored they gave her as wife to him, than whom she would far rather have received death. And after the wedding was brought to a close, Florida went with her husband to the duchy of Cardona, taking with her Aventurada, to whom she privily made her complaints both of the rigour of her mother and the grief she had at the loss of the son of the Fortunate Infante. But of her grief at the loss of Amadour she said nothing save by way of consolation. And from this time she resolved to keep God always before her eyes; and so well concealed her

sorrows that none of her people ever perceived that her husband was displeasing to her.

So passed a long time, Florida living a life scarce better than death. And of all this she failed not to send news to her lover, who knowing the greatness of her heart and the love she bore to the son of the Fortunate Infante, thought it scarce possible that she should continue to live, and mourned for her as one worse than dead. And by this dolour his own was increased, since he would willingly have continued all his days a slave, if Florida could but have a husband to her liking; so did he forget his own woe in that which his sweetheart had. And for that he heard, by a friend he had at the Court of the King of Tunis, that the aforesaid King was resolved to give him his choice of impalement or renouncing his faith, because he greatly desired for him to become a good Mussulman and continue in his service, he persuaded his master to let him go on his parole. And this master put upon his head so high a ransom as he thought could never be found by a man of small means. So then, without speaking on the matter to the King, his master let him go. And when he had gone to Court and stood in the presence, he went forth amongst all his friends to the intent that he might get together the ransom, and straightway betook him to Barcelona, whither the young Duke of Cardona, his mother, and Florida had gone on some charges. And as soon as his wife Aventurada had tidings that her husband was returned from captivity, she bore them to Florida, who rejoiced thereat, as if for love of her. But fearing lest her joy upon seeing him might change the manner of her countenance, and lest they who knew her not might take a bad opinion of her, she withdrew

herself to a window, that she might see him coming from afar. And as soon as she perceived him she went down by a stair so dark that no one could see her change colour, and embracing Amadour she led him to her room and that of her mother-in-law, to whom he was unknown. But he tarried there only two days, and in that time made himself as much beloved by them all as he had been in the household of the Countess of Aranda.

It is not my intent to tell you of all the talk that Florida and he were able to have together, and the complaints she made to him for the ills done her in his absence. After much weeping, both for that she was married to one against her liking, and also that she had lost beyond hope of seeing again him whom she loved so well, she determined to draw some causes of consolation out of the love and firm trust she had in Amadour, though she never durst declare it to him. But he, having some suspicions, lost neither time nor opportunity of letting her know how great a love he had towards her. And just at that time, when she was ready to receive him not as a servant but as a true and perfect lover, it fell out by evil hap that the King, by reason of certain weighty charges, commanded the immediate presence of Amadour. And this so grieved his wife that, on hearing of the news, she swooned away, and falling down a stair did herself such hurt that she was not taken up alive. Florida, who through this death lost all consolation, made mourning as one who weeps for her father and mother and all her kinsfolk. But still more did Amadour grieve, not alone that he had lost on his side one of the best wives in the world, but also that he had lost all means of seeing

Florida ; at which he fell into such sadness that he was like to have died. The old Duchess of Cardona came often to speak with him, and drew from the philosophical writings many good and solid reasons for him to bear this loss with patience. But this did not much avail him, for if death itself was torment, love did but increase the agony. So Amadour, having beheld the burial of his wife and having no more cause for delaying to perform the King's commands, was filled with such despair that his brain wellnigh fell into some distemper. But Florida, in endeavouring to console him, spent a whole afternoon discoursing to him in the most gracious sort to the intent of diminishing the extremity of his grief, assuring him that she would find better means of seeing him than he thought. And since he was to set out on the morrow, and was so weak that he could hardly stir from his bed, he entreated her to come and see him in the evening after every one had done so, which she promised, ignorant that his love knew not bounds nor reason. And he, who found himself in despair of ever seeing her again whom he had served so long, made more complaint than was his custom, that the people of the house might not believe him to have twenty-four hours to live.

After that every one had been to see him, Florida, her very husband desiring her, went to him, intending as matter of consolation to declare her affection, and to assure him that, as far as honour allowed, she would give him her love. And she sat herself down on the chair by the bedside, and began her consolation by weeping with him. Amadour, seeing her grief, with the face of one half dead, let himself fall into her arms like a fainting man. Yet, even this, he sought to attempt

her dishonour, whereat Florida, mightily astonished, suspected rather that he had taken leave of his senses than that he could play so vile a part. Wherefore she called aloud to a gentleman whom she well knew to be in the room, and at this Amadour, in the bitterness of his despair, threw himself back so suddenly upon the bed that the gentleman held him for a dead man. Florida, having arisen from the chair, said to him: "Go presently and get some vinegar." And this he did, whereupon Florida began: "Amadour, what fantasy is mounted to your brain? and what were you minded to have done?" He, who by reason of love had lost all reason, replied: "Doth so long a service as mine deserve so cruel a return?" "And where is that honour," said Florida, "which you have so often preached to me?" "Ah! mistress," said Amadour, "it is not possible to be more tender of your honour than I have been; for before that you were married I so conquered my heart that you knew nothing of my desire; but now that you are married, and your honour is in safe keeping, what wrong is this I do you? For by the very force of love I have won you. He who first had your heart laid so poor a siege to your love that he well deserved the loss. He to whom your body now belongs is by no means worthy of your heart. But I, mistress, who for these five or six years have borne for your sake so many woes, you cannot deny that it is I alone who deserve both your body and your heart. And if you would call your conscience into court, be well assured that being encompassed round with love on every side, we shall not be held to sin; do we account them sinful who slay themselves in a fit of madness? Nay, passion and reason cannot dwell

together—and love is the most unbearable of passions. What sin would you impute to one who is carried along by such irresistible might? I am about to go, having no hope of seeing you any more. And if it be not your pleasure to grant me my desire, you shall soon perceive that your hard heart has caused me a most miserable and cruel death."

Florida, no less grieved than astonished at such discourse from him, from whose lips she never thought to have heard the like, said weeping: "Alas! Amadour, is this the virtuous talk you had with me while I was yet young? Is this the honour and the good conscience you have so often counselled me rather to die than lose? Have you then forgotten your good examples of virtuous ladies, who made resistance to light love, and all your despising of wanton women? I cannot believe, Amadour, that you are so far from yourself that God, your conscience, and my honour are altogether dead within you. But if it indeed be as you say, I praise the Divine Goodness for that it has delivered me from the pit into which I wellnigh had fallen, and shown by your speech the wickedness of your heart. For having lost the son of the Fortunate Infante, not only because I am married, but also because I am advised he loves another, and seeing myself wedded to one to whom I cannot, take what pains I may, give my heart, I was resolved entirely and altogether to set my soul and my affections on loving you. And this love I founded on the virtuousness I perceived in you, and to which, by your help, I deem myself to have attained; and the manner of it is to love my honour and my conscience better than my life. Bottomed upon this rock of honour, I came here determined to make it yet more

sure ; but in a moment, Amadour, you have shown me that in place of pure and shining marble it would have been founded on a quaking sand, or a filthy mire. And though this my strong place, where I hoped to dwell for ever, has been in great part begun, you have suddenly brought it down, even to the dust. Wherefore you must now put aside every hope you had concerning me, and resolve yourself, in what place soever I be, not to address me by words or looks, nor ever deem that I can or will change this my determination. All this I say to you with great grief, but if I had so far gone as to swear with you eternal love, I know my heart, and am well assured that in that strife of the soul I should have died. And even now my sorrowful amaze for that you have deceived me is so great that I am persuaded it will make my life a short and sad one. And with these words I bid you farewell, but remember that it is for ever ! "

I spare you the relation of the grief that Amadour felt at the hearing of these words, for it is not only impossible to write but even to conceive, except to those who have been in like case. And seeing that with this cruel conclusion she would leave him, he took her by the arm, since he well knew that if he suffered this bad opinion of him to remain in her, he would lose her for ever. Wherefore, having put on as solemn a countenance as he was able, he said to her: " Mistress, I have all my life desired to love a woman of honour, and since I have found but little of that commodity, I was fain to make trial of you, to see if you were as worthy to be held in esteem for your virtue as you are to be loved. And this I now know for a certainty, wherefore I give thanks to God, who has directed my love

towards such perfection, entreating at your hands pardon for the folly of my endeavour, seeing that the issue thereof has been to your honour and my great contentment." Florida, who by his example began to perceive the wickedness of men, as she had been slow to believe the evil that was in him, so was now slow to believe the good that was not, and replied: "I would to God you spoke the truth! But I am not so simple that the estate of marriage in which I am does not let me know that the blindness of a strong desire made you do what you have done. For if God had slacked the reins, I am assured you would not have drawn in the bridle. Those who make search for virtue go on a different road to the one you have taken. But it is enough; if too lightly I believed in your virtue, it is time I should know the truth, which now delivers me from out of your hands." Thus saying, Florida went forth from the room, and while the night went on did nought else but weep, taking at this change so great grief that her heart had shrewd work to withstand the assaults of love and regret. For though, reason guiding her, she was resolved not to love him any more, yet the heart, which is lord over itself, would by no means allow this, so she was determined to satisfy her affection and continue to love him, and yet to satisfy her honour and never make any sign to him of her love.

And on the morrow Amadour went forth in such woe as you have heard; nevertheless his heart, which had not its equal in the world, would not suffer him to despair, but set him on some new means for seeing Florida again, and winning back her favour. Wherefore as he went to the King of Spain, who was at Toledo, he took his way through the county of Aranda, and came

there one evening very late, and found the Countess in great sadness by reason of the absence of her daughter Florida. And when she saw Amadour she kissed and embraced him as if he had been her own son, as much for the love she bore him as for the suspicion she had that he loved Florida, of whom she made curious inquiry. And he told her the best news he could, but not all the truth, and confessed the love that was between them, which Florida had always kept secret, praying her to give him her help in having tidings of her daughter, and soon to bring her to Aranda. And on the morrow he continued on his journey, and having performed the charges of the King, went to the wars with so changed and sorrowful a countenance that ladies, captains, and all of his acquaintance scarcely recognised him. And henceforth black was his only wear, but of much coarser frieze than was due to his dead wife, whose loss served to conceal what was in his heart. So Amadour passed three or four years without returning at all to Court. And the Countess of Aranda hearing how Florida was changed, and that to see her was pitiful, sent to her, wishing her to return home. But these tidings had the opposite effect, for when Florida heard that Amadour had made manifest the love that was between them to her mother, and that her mother, all good and virtuous as she was, held their love for an honest one, she was in great perplexity. For on the one hand she saw that if she told her mother the whole truth, Amadour might get some hurt thereby, than which death would have been preferred by her, for she felt herself to be strong enough to punish him without calling her kinsfolk to her aid. But on the other hand she perceived that if she concealed the evil she knew of him

she would be constrained by her mother and all her kin to speak to him and show him a good countenance. And this she feared would but strengthen him in his wicked purpose. But inasmuch as he was far away, she said nothing, and wrote to him when her mother charged her so to do ; all the same these letters of hers let him know pretty plainly that they came from obedience and not good will, and so caused him as much sorrow in the reading as aforetime tidings from her had given him joy.

At the end of two or three years, having done so many and so great deeds, that would scarcely be contained by all the paper in Spain, he conceived a most daring imagination, not to win the heart of Florida, which he held as lost, but to gain the victory over his enemy, since it was in this manner she showed to him. He put behind him all the counsels of reason, and even the fear of death, of which he would thus make hazard, and this was his fixed resolve. He made himself so esteemed of the Viceroy that he was sent to speak to the King of a certain secret undertaking against Leucate; and before that he had spoken to the King, he declared the matter to the Countess of Aranda, to take her mind upon it. And he came post haste to the county of Aranda, where he was advised was Florida, sending a friend of his secretly to the Countess to make known his approach, and praying her to keep it in great privity, and for him to speak with her at night, so that no one should be advertised thereof. The Countess, being glad on account of his coming, told Florida, and sent her to undress herself in her husband's room, to the intent that she should be ready when the time was come and all others were in bed. Florida, who was by no means recovered from her first fear, made

no sign to her mother, but went apart to an oratory. There she commended herself into the keeping of our Lord, praying Him to preserve her heart from all evil lust. And it then came into her mind that Amadour had often praised her beauty, which, though she had been for a long while sick, was by no means diminished; so preferring to do hurt to this beauty than to suffer the heart of so good a man by it to be kindled with an evil flame, she took a stone that chanced to be in the chapel, and with it gave herself so hearty a blow that all her face was out of shape. And to the intent that none should suspect that she herself had done it, she, when summoned by her mother, let herself fall with her face to the earth while she was going out of the chapel, and cried with a loud voice. And when the Countess came she found her daughter in a pitiful case, and straightway had her face dressed and bound up.

After the Countess had led her to her room, she told her to go and hold discourse with Amadour until the company was departed; and this did Florida, thinking there were others with him. But finding herself all alone and the door shut on her, she was as much vexed as Amadour was glad, since he conceived that by persuasion or force he would get his desire. And when he had spoken to her, and found her of the same mind as afore, and that she would rather die than change it, maddened with despair, he exclaimed: "I swear to you by God that the fruit of my travail shall not be plucked from me by your nice points of conscience; for since love, long-suffering, and humble prayers have availed nothing, I will not spare my strength to gain that without which I shall perish." And Florida saw his eyes and the manner of his countenance that they were

changed, and the fairest face in the world was as red as fire, and his most sweet and pleasant regard was so dreadful to look upon that a consuming flame seemed to blaze within his heart and on his face, and in this phrensy he took within one of his mighty hands her two hands most delicate and weak. She, seeing that all resistance was of no avail, since she was thus straitly held a prisoner that she could not fly, much less make defence, knew not what to do save to seek if there were not in him some traces of his former love by the recollection of which he might forget his cruelty; wherefore she said to him: "Amadour, though you now hold me for an enemy, I entreat you, by the honourable love I formerly thought you had for me, to give ear before you begin your torture." And when she perceived that he gave ear to her, she went on with her discourse, saying: "Alas, Amadour, to what intent do you seek from me a thing whereby you will take no contentment, and will give me the greatest of all pains? You made so good trial of my mind in the time of my youth and beauty, by reason of which you might take some excuse, that I am astonished in this season of my age, and ugliness, and sorrow, you seek for what you cannot find. I am well assured you know my mind that it is not changed, wherefore you cannot gain save by force your desire. And if you look upon my face, and, seeing the manner of it, forget its beauty that was of old, you will not, I think, be wishful of approaching nearer. And if there are in you any remains of bygone love, I am persuaded that pity will conquer your madness. And to this pity, which I have found in you, I make my lamentation and pray for grace, to the intent that you will let me live to the

end of my days in peace, and in that honour, over which, by your counsel, I am determined to keep watch and ward. For though the love you bore me is turned to hatred, and more for revenge than passion you would fain make me the most wretched of all women, I assure you that this thing shall not be, since against my desire you will compel me to make manifest your wickedness to her who believes you to be so good, and thereby your life shall be put in no small risk." Amadour, breaking into her words, said to her: "If I must needs die, then all the sooner shall I be quit of this torment; but your misshapen countenance, which I believe to be the work of your own hands, shall not hinder me from working my will, for though you were but bones I would hug them closely to me." And Florida, perceiving that sound reason, prayers, and tears availed nothing, and that in his cruelty he would endeavour to accomplish his wicked desire, called to her aid that help she feared as much as death, and cried in a sad and woeful voice for her mother. The Countess, hearing her daughter summon her in such a voice, had great suspicion of what was indeed the truth, and ran into the room as quickly as might be. Amadour, not being as near death as he would have Florida believe, so seasonably abandoned his enterprise, that the lady on coming in found him at the door and Florida far enough from him. Forthwith the Countess asked: "Amadour, what is it? Tell me the truth." And he, who was never devoid of invention, with a sad and solemn countenance, answered her: "Alas! mistress, into what case has Florida fallen? Never was I more astonished, for as I have told you, I thought to have had her favour, but now clearly perceive I have none of

it. It appears to me that while she was with you she was no less wise and virtuous than she is now, but she did not then make it a point of conscience to speak with no one, and now that I would fain have looked upon her she would by no means suffer me. And seeing this change towards me, I was assured that it was but a dream, and required her hand that, after the manner of the country, I might kiss it, but this also she would not suffer me to do. I confess that I took her hand with a gentle compulsion and kissed it, and in this I did wrongfully and crave your forgiveness, but naught else did I ask of her. Yet she, as I believe, having determined my death, called you as you have seen; I know not wherefore, unless she feared some other intent, which I in truth had not. Natheless, mistress, however, that may be, I acknowledge that I have done amiss, for though she ought to love them that serve her well, I alone, who am of all most devoted to her, am exiled from her favour. But I will still be towards you and her as I have always been, and I entreat you to continue me in your good will, since through no fault of mine I have lost hers." The Countess, who half believed and was half in doubt, went to her daughter, and said to her: "Wherefore called you me after this fashion?" Florida replied that she was afraid. And although the Countess made particular inquiry of her, she got no other reply, for Florida, seeing herself escaped from the hands of her enemy, held his ill-success sufficient punishment.

After that the Countess had for a long while held parley with Amadour, she made him stay with Florida to see what face he would put on it. But he said little to his mistress, save that he thanked her for not telling

her mother the truth, and prayed at least, since she had driven him from out her heart, she would not let another man take his place. And to the first matter of his discourse she thus replied: "If I had had other means of defending myself except my voice, you would not have heard it; and you shall have no worse thing from me if you cease to constrain me as you have done hitherto. And be not afraid lest I love another, for since in the heart which I deemed the most virtuous in the world I have not found that I desired, I believe not I shall find it in any other man." Thus speaking, she bade him farewell. Her mother, though she carefully regarded his face, could come to no conclusion, save that henceforth she was well assured her daughter had no love for Amadour, and held her so void of reason as to hate everything she herself loved. And from that hour she behaved in such sort towards Florida that she spoke not to her but chidingly for seven whole years, and all this on account of Amadour. So during this time Florida turned the fear she had of being with her husband to a desire not to stir from him, because of her mother's rigorous entreatment of her. But finding this of no avail, she resolved to put a deceit upon Amadour, and, laying aside for a day or two her cold aspect, advised him to make proposals of love to a lady who, she said, had spoken to her of the love that was between them. Now this lady was in the household of the Queen of Spain, and was called Loretta. Amadour, believing this story, and thinking hereby to regain the favour of his mistress, made love to Loretta, who was the wife of a captain, one of the King's viceroys. And she, exceeding glad for that she had gained such a lover, set such store by him, that the rumour of it was

blazed abroad, and even the Countess of Aranda, since she was at Court, was advertised of it, wherefore she ceased henceforth to torment Florida as had been her custom. And one day Florida heard that this warrior husband of Loretta's was become so jealous that he was determined, as best he might, to kill Amadour; and she who, despite her altered countenance towards him, could wish him no ill, presently advised him of it. But he, who easily took to his old paths, replied to her that if it was her pleasure to give him three hours of her company every day, he would speak no more with Loretta; but this she would not grant. "Wherefore then," said Amadour, "since you are not willing to give me life, do you trouble yourself to guard me from death? Save, indeed, that you hope to cause me greater torments by keeping me alive than a thousand deaths. But though death escape me, I will seek till I find it, for the day of my death shall be the first of my rest."

About this time came news that the King of Granada had begun to make great war against the King of Spain, so that the King sent the Prince his son, and with him the Constable of Castille and the Duke of Alba, two old and prudent lords. The Duke of Cardona and the Count of Aranda were not willing to stay at home, and so entreated of the King to give them some command; and this he did according to the dignity of their houses. And for their safe keeping he gave them into the charge of Amadour, who during the war did such wondrous and mighty deeds as seemed to savour rather of despair than bravery. And to come to my story, I will show you how his great courage was proved by the manner of his dying; for the Moors, having

made a show of giving battle, and seeing so large an army of Christians, feigned to retreat, whereupon the Spaniards began to pursue them;[1] but the old Constable and the Duke of Alba, having a suspicion of their device, kept back against his will the Prince of Spain, so that he did not cross the river. But this, notwithstanding that it was forbidden them, the Duke of Cardona and the Count of Aranda did, and when the Moors perceived that they were pursued of a small company they wheeled round, and with one stroke of a scimitar the Duke of Cardona was slain, and so grievously was the Count of Aranda wounded that he was left where he fell for dead. At this Amadour came up so furiously enraged that he broke through all the press of battle, and made take the two bodies and carry them to the camp of the Prince, who grieved for them as if they had been his own brothers. But on searching out their wounds, the Count of Aranda was found to be still alive, and so was carried on a litter to his house, where he lay for a long while sick. And they bore to Cardona the dead body of the Duke. And after having in this manner rescued the two bodies, Amadour took so little heed for himself, that he was at last surrounded on every side by a host of Moors, and no more wishing capture to be made of his body than he had made capture of the body of his mistress, and not to break his faith with God as he had broken it with her; knowing that, if he was taken to the King of Granada, he

[1] This, I think, must be the battle of Pavia, where Francis was taken captive, and Alençon got the hurt he died of. Whoever Amadour may be, he may well have died there, for scarce a noble house in France but lost a son that day. La Palice, General on that occasion, Bonnivet, Margaret's unvictorious lover (who may be Amadour), and half the chivalry of the kingdom lay dead there.

would either be constrained to die a cruel death or renounce Christianity, he was determined not to give his enemies the glory of his death or capture. And so kissing the cross of his sword, and commending his soul to God, he drove it home so deeply that it skilled not to give a second blow. So died Amadour, and the sorrow after him was that his valour deserved. And the news of it was noised abroad through all the coasts of Spain, and Florida, who was at Barcelona, where her husband had given command he was to be buried, heard the report thereof. And after that she had made for him honourable burial, without speaking to her mother or her stepmother, she became a nun of the Convent of Jesus, taking for her spouse Him who had delivered her from the burning love of Amadour, and from her weariness in the companionship of such a husband. Henceforth she turned all her affections to Godward, and, after for a long while living as a nun, gave up her soul with such gladness as when the bride goeth forth to meet the bridegroom.

"I am well aware, ladies, that this long novel may have been wearisome to some among you, but if I had wished to tell it after the manner of him who told it me, it would have been much longer. And I entreat you, while you make the virtue of Florida your ensample, to abate somewhat of her hardness of heart, and not to believe too much good of any man, lest when you know to the contrary you be the occasion to him of a cruel death, and to yourselves of a life of sorrow."

And after that Parlamente had had a long and attentive audience, she said to Hircan: "Is it your opinion that this woman was pressed to the bitter end, and made virtuous resistance?" "No," said Hircan,

"for a woman cannot make a feebler resistance than crying out, and had she been where none could hear her I know not how she would have fared; and if Amadour had had more love and less fear, he would not for so little have left the work undone. And for all this case of yours I am not shaken from what I maintain—that no man who loves with a perfect love, or who is beloved of a lady, can fail to bring matters to a good issue, if he carry himself as he ought. Natheless, I must praise Amadour, insomuch that in some sort he did his duty." "What duty?" said Oisille. "Call you it duty for the servant to take by force his mistress, to whom he owes all reverence and obedience?" Whereupon Saffredent took up the discourse and said: "When our mistresses sit in state in chamber and hall, holding session upon us at their ease as our judges, then we fall on our knees before them; in fear and trembling we lead them forth to dance; so diligently do we serve them that we know their needs before they ask; so desirous are we to do suit unto them, and so fearful of their displeasure, that those who look upon us pity us, and often hold us as dull-witted as the beasts, and men forsaken of their understanding. Then do they give glory to our ladies, whose visage is so bold, and their speech so fair, that they make those that know them but on the outside both to fear, esteem, and love them. But when we are alone it becomes plain that they are women and we men, and then is *mistress* changed to *sweetheart*, and *servant* unto *lover*. To this consents the proverb:

> 'He that serves as best he can
> Maketh master out of man.'

They have such honour as men have, who can give it

them and take it away, and they see our long-suffering that it is great; but it is reasonable that this should have its sure reward, when honour thereby can take no hurt." "You speak not of that true honour," said Longarine, "which is the best contentment for this life; for when all the world call me honourable woman, and I know that I am not, this praise does but increase my shame, and makes me still more to be confounded; and in like manner when men speak evil of me, and I know my innocency, their blame is but my praise." "Whatever you have said," continued Geburon, "I am well persuaded that Amadour was an honourable knight, and a virtuous, and without compare; and though the names are feigned, I think I can recognise him. But since it was not Parlamente's pleasure to name names, neither is it mine. But be assured that, if he be the man I think, he knew not fear, and his heart was still full of love and bravery."

Then Oisille said to them all: "So joyously do I esteem this day to have been spent, that if we continue in like fashion on the others, the time will pass all too quick. But see how low is the sun, and the bells of the Abbey have this long while rung to evensong. But I told no one of this since I had rather hear the end of the story than the vesper music." At these words all arose, and when they were come into the church they found there the monks who had awaited them a good hour and more. And when they had heard evensong, they took supper, with much talk of the stories they had heard, each one searching through the byways of his memory, that the following day might be passed in as much delight. And after playing many a game in the meadow, they went to bed, and with much contentment brought to an end the first day.

## DAY THE SECOND.

ON THE SECOND DAY EACH ONE TELLS THE FIRST CONCEIT THAT RISETH IN HIS BRAIN.

### PROLOGUE.

ON the morrow they arose with a great desire of returning to the place in which, on the day before, they had received so great pleasure, for so ready was each one's tale that time passed slowly for it to be told. After that they had heard Oisille's reading, and also mass, where they all prayed God to the intent that He might continue to put words into their mouths, they went to dinner, recollecting meanwhile many a notable relation.

But after dinner, when they had rested in their rooms, they returned at the appointed time to the meadow, where all seemed favourable to their undertaking, and being seated on the grass, Parlamente began to say: "Since I brought yesterday to an end, it is my part to name one who shall begin to-day. And seeing that Oisille, the oldest and wisest of us was the first to speak, I give my vote to the youngest—I say not the most foolish, being assured that if we all follow her example we shall not keep evensong so long awaiting as we did yesterday. Wherefore, Nomerfide, do you give your vote to some one. Nomerfide replied: "I give my vote to Dagoucin, for so wise is he that he would rather die than make a foolish speech." Dagoucin

thanked her for the repute in which she held his good sense, and began to say: "The history which I will presently relate to you is to the intent that you may perceive how love blinds the greatest hearts and the noblest, and how difficult is wickedness to be conquered by means howsoever good."

## NOVEL XII.

*A Duke of Florence would have his friend prostitute his sister to him; but in place of love meets with death.*

Ten years are now overpast since there bore rule in Florence that Duke[1] who had for wife Margaret, bastard daughter to the Emperor. And for that she was so young, that it was not lawful for him to marry her till she grew older, he spent his time with other ladies in the town. Amongst the rest, he was in love with a pretty, wise, and virtuous lady, sister to a gentleman whom the Duke loved as himself, and whose authority in his house was so great that his word was feared and obeyed as if it were the Duke's. And the Duke had no secret he did not declare unto him, in such sort that he might wellnigh be named his second self.

And the Duke seeing his sister that she was so honourable a woman that, after seeking every way, he could find no means of declaring his love to her, came to the gentleman he loved so well, and said to him: "If there were a thing in the world, my friend, that I

[1] This was Alessandro, the nominee, creature, and son-in-law of Charles V., the half brother of Catherine de Medici; illegitimate, dissolute, with black blood in his veins; such as he was, the first Duke of Florence.

would not do for you, I should fear to make known my mind to you, much less to ask your aid for the accomplishing of my desire. But so great a love do I bear you, that if I had mother, wife, or child, who could be effectual for the saving of your life, I would so use them rather than let you die in torment; and I esteem your love towards me is like to mine, and if I, who am master over you, love you so well, you at least love me no less. Wherefore I have a secret to show you, from concealing which I am fallen into the case you now see, and from which I hope amendment either through your offices or my death."

The gentleman hearing this discourse of his master, and seeing his grief not feigned, and his face all covered with tears, took so great compassion on him, that he said: "O, my lord, I am your creature; all the contentments and all the honour I have in the world come from you; you can speak to me as to yourself, well assured that whatever is in my power is likewise in yours." Whereupon the Duke declared the love he bore his sister, that it was so strong and fierce that if he did not, by his means, possess her, he saw not how he could live any longer. For he knew well that with such as her prayers and gifts would not avail anything. Wherefore he prayed the gentleman, if he loved as he was beloved, that he would find some means of getting for him this delight, which he never hoped to have in any other way. The brother, loving his sister and the honour of his house better than the pleasure of the Duke, would fain have made him some remonstrance, entreating him to use him in all other straits, but not to ask of him this abominable thing, to compass the dishonour of his own blood, and saying that his heart

and his honour alike forbade him take any part therein. The Duke, inflamed with unbearable displeasure, and biting his nails, replied in great wrath: "So be it then, and since I find no friendship at all in you, I know how to play my part." The gentleman, well advised of his master's cruelty, was afraid, and said to him: "My lord, since it is your pleasure, I will speak to her and bring you her reply." And the Duke returned: "As you love my life, so will I love yours," and so left him.

The gentleman knew well what was the intent of these words. And for a day or two he considered what was best to be done, without coming into the presence of the Duke. On the one hand there came before him all that was due to his master, the contentments and honours he had received of him; on the other, the fame of his house, the virtuousness and chastity of his sister, whom he was well persuaded would not listen to this wickedness, unless by some cozenage of his own finding she was overcome by force, and this such an infamous deed that he and his would be for ever disgraced by it. And tossed from one side to the other, he at last determined rather to die than do his sister, one of the best women in all Italy, such an evil turn. But he thought to do still better if he delivered his country from such a tyrant, who would forcibly put this stain upon his house, for he held for certain that if he did not slay the Duke his own life and the lives of his kinsfolk would be in small security. Wherefore, without parley with his sister or any beside on the matter, he took counsel with himself how, by one blow, he might best save his life and avenge his shame. And at the end of two days he went to the Duke and told him he had used such order with his sister that, after much toil on

his part, she had at last agreed to do him pleasure, if he would keep the matter so secret that none, save her brother, should be advertised thereof.

The Duke, desiring to hear this news, easily believed it, and embracing the messenger, promised him all he might ask for, and entreated him presently to bring affairs to a conclusion, and together they appointed a day.[1] Whether the Duke was glad, it skills not to ask, and when he saw that the long-desired night drew near, on which he had good hopes of gaining the victory over her whom he aforetime deemed unconquerable, he went apart very early with the gentleman, forgetting not nightcaps and perfumed shirts, and such like gear, the best that he had. And when all were gone away, he went with the gentleman to his sister's lodging, and entering in came into a bravely ordered chamber. The gentleman then said to him: "My lord, I go seek one who will not enter into this room without blushing, but before morning I hope she will be assured of you." So saying he left the Duke and went to his own room, where he found one of his people, to whom he said: "Have you a heart bold enough to follow me whither I would be avenged on my greatest enemy?" The fellow, knowing not what he was called upon to do, replied, "Why, aye sir, were it against my lord Duke." Whereupon the gentleman led him away so suddenly that he had no time to take other arms, but only a dagger, which he wore on him. And when the Duke heard their return, thinking that the gentleman bore with him her for whom he lusted, he opened wide both the curtain and his eyes to look upon and receive the expected blessing; but in place of seeing the preserva-

[1] It was the evening of the 6th January 1537.

tion of his life, he beheld the instrument of his early death. And this was a naked sword, which the gentleman held in his hands, and with which he struck the Duke, who was clad only in his shirt. But he, wanting in arms and not courage, got behind the bed, and taking the gentleman by the middle, said to him : "Is it thus you keep your promise?" And having none other weapons save teeth and nails, he bit him in the thumb, and by the force of his arm so defended himself that they both fell on to the floor beside the bed. Then the gentleman, not trusting overmuch in himself, called upon his follower, who, finding the Duke and his master intermingled so confusedly that he knew not which of the two to strike, pushed them with his feet into the middle of the room, and essayed to cut the Duke's throat for him. But he still defended himself till loss of blood made him so weak as not to be able to do any more, whereupon the gentleman and his follower threw him on the bed, and there, with blows from the dagger, they made an end of killing him. Then drawing the curtain, they went forth and shut up the dead body in the chamber.

And when he saw himself victorious over his great enemy, by whose death he thought to have freed the commonwealth, his work seemed to him but half done, if he used not in like manner the five or six who were kinsfolk of the Duke. To which intent he spoke to his follower, that he should go seek them one by one, and do on them like vengeance. But his follower replied, having neither courage nor folly for such an undertaking: "It seems to me that for this present time you have achieved enough, and would do better to think of saving your own life than depriving others of theirs.

For if we take as much time to put an end to each one of them as we did to slay the Duke, the day will dawn upon our enterprise unfinished, even if we chance to find them undefended." The gentleman, whom a bad conscience rendered fearful, gave ear to his follower, and taking him alone, went to a Bishop, whose charge was that of Portreeve, to give authoritiy for posting. To him the gentleman said: "This evening tidings came to me that my brother was at the point of death, and therefore I asked leave of the Duke to go to him, which he has granted me. So I pray that you give orders that I may have two good horses, and that the town gates may be opened to me." The Bishop, hearing his entreaty, and the command of the Duke, his master, gave him forthwith a paper, by means of which the horses were granted him and the gates opened, even as he had desired. And in place of going to see any brother of his, he went straight to Venice, where he healed him of the bites the Duke had given, and after that journeyed to Turkey.

But on the morrow all the servants of the Duke, seeing how slow he was to return, had good suspicion that he was gone to see some woman, but since he tarried so long away made search for him in all the quarters of the town. And the poor Duchess, who began to bear her Duke great love, hearing that they searched and found him not, was exceeding troubled. But when the gentleman, his familiar friend, was seen no more than he, they went to his house and there sought for him. And finding blood at the door of his room, they entered in, but found no one who could give them any tidings. And following the trace of blood, these poor servants of the Duke came to the

chamber where he lay, and the door was shut. And when it was broken open they saw the whole place that it was full of blood, and drawing aside the curtain they found the body stretched out upon the bed and sleeping its last sleep. Then were the servants sorely grieved, and having borne the body to the palace, they found there the Bishop, who told them how that the gentleman had last night fled the town on pretext of seeing his brother. Whereby it was clearly ascertained that it was he who had done this murder. And it was also proved that his sister had not so much as heard him speak of it, and she, although in great astonishment at what he had done, yet on account of it loved him all the more, since he had not spared to make hazard of his life, that she might be delivered from so cruel an enemy. And more and more honourably and virtuously did she continue in her former manner of living, for though, by reason of the sequestration of her goods, she was poor, yet did she and her sister get as honourable and rich husbands as were in Italy, and henceforth have always lived in good repute.

"By this, ladies, you may know what fear you should have of Love, since, though he is but a boy, he takes delight in tormenting prince and peasant, strong and weak, alike; blinding them all, so that they become forgetful of God and their conscience, and at the last, of life itself. And princes and those set in authority should beware of doing displeasure to those under them. For there is none so small that he cannot do hurt, if God would by him take vengeance on the sinner, and none so great that he should entreat evil those who are in his hands."

This relation was well listened to by all the company,

but it engendered amongst them diverse opinions; for some maintained the gentleman to have done his duty in saving his life and the honour of his sister, and at the same time freeing his country from a tyrant;[1] others said no, since it was foul ingratitude to put to death him who had given this gentleman so many honours. The ladies said he was a good brother and a good citizen to boot; the men, that he was a traitorous and wicked servant; and mighty pleasant hearing were the conclusions on both sides. But the ladies, as they are wont, spoke rather by passion than sound logic, affirming the Duke to have been worthy of death, and calling him who had given the blow exceeding happy. Wherefore, seeing the great disputation that was come of it, Dagoucin said to them: "Oddsfish, ladies, enough of disputation about a thing gone-by and of the past; take you care lest your beauty bring about as dreadful murders as that I have told you of." Whereupon Parlamente replied to him: *La Belle Dame sans Mercy* would teach us that few folk die of this pleasant sickness."[2] "Would to God," said Dagoucin, "that all you ladies here present were to know this position how false it is! And then I am assured they would not desire to be named *Sans Mercy*, nor to be like that unbelieving woman who, for want of a gracious word, left her poor lover to his death." "Would you then," said Parla-

[1] Tyrannicide was not considered a crime in Italy, rather as Guicciardini holds, supremely praiseworthy. Readers of Corio, and readers of Mr Symonds, will remember the pathetic account of young Olgiati of Milan, who slew the tyrant Galeazzo Maria Sforza, the violator of his sister's honour. "Mors acerba!" he cried, "fama perpetua. Stabit vetus memoria facti."

[2] "Si gracieuse maladie
Ne met guères de gens à mort."

—La Belle Dame sans Mercy, Alain Chartier.

mente, "that, to save the life of one who affirms he loves us, we should risk our honour and conscience?" "That by no means is my intent," answered Dagoucin, "for he who loves with a perfect love had rather wound himself than his lady's honour. Wherefore I am of opinion that an honourable and gracious reply can but increase virtue and better the conscience, and he is no true lover who seeks aught else." "All the same," said Ennasuitte, "all your prayers do but begin with honour and end with its contrary. And if all who are here present will tell the truth, I will believe them on their oath." Hircan swore he had never loved another man's wife, but only his own. So said Simontault, and added that he had often wished all women to be surly except his own wife. Geburon said to him: "Verily you deserve that yours should be such as you desire others; but, as for me, I can with good conscience swear to you that I have only loved one woman, whom I would rather see die than that she should do anything to make me have less regard for her. For my love was founded only on her virtue, wherefore I did not wish to see any stain thereon for the sake of my pleasure." Whereupon Saffredent began to laugh, saying: "I thought, Geburon, that your good sense and your love for your wife would have saved you from being a gallant, but I see that it is not so, since you make use of our terms of art, whereby we deceive the keenest and gain a hearing from the most prudent. And where is the woman to close her ears when we begin our passages with honour and virtue? For if we were to plainly show them our hearts, a good many now welcome amongst the ladies would be poorly accounted of by them. But we cover our devil with the bravest angel we can find. And beneath this

covering, before we are discovered, we have some mighty pretty entertainment. Perchance indeed we may so skilfully handle their hearts, that thinking they are on the straight road to virtue, they have neither means nor time to draw back their feet, when they find themselves on the threshold of vice." "Faith," said Geburon, "I thought you other than you are, and that virtue gave you more pleasure than pleasure itself." "What say you," replied Saffredent, "is there then a greater virtue than to love as God has commanded us? Methinks that it is much better to love a woman as a woman, than after the fashion of many to make of her an idol." But the ladies were all on the side of Geburon, and would have Saffredent keep silence. So he said: "To speak no more will be an easy burden to me, for I have been so evil entreated in your talk, that I wish not to return to it." "Your evil thoughts," answered Longarine, "are the cause of your evil treatment. For what virtuous woman would have you for her lover after the manner of your discourse?" "There have been women," he replied, "who have not found me tedious, and yet would not yield to you in virtue; but let us speak no more of it, so that my anger may displease neither you nor myself. Let us see to whom Dagoucin will give his vote." And he said: "I give it to Parlamente, for I think that she more than any beside ought to know what is honourable and perfect friendship." "Since I am chosen," said Parlamente, "for the third story, I will tell you what befell a lady who hath alway been of my acquaintance, and all whose thoughts are open to me."

## NOVEL XIII.

*How a sea-captain served love with the sauce of religion.*

In the household of the Regent, mother to King Francis, there lived a lady of great devotion, married to a gentleman in this point like to her. But otherwise they differed, for he was old, and she was young and pretty; yet did she love and serve him all as if he had been a brave young gallant. And that he might have no cause for sorrow or weariness, she set herself to live as a woman of his own age, putting from her all company, fine gear, dances, and pastimes, in which young women are wont to take delight; but all her delight and pleasure was to do service to God, on which account her husband had for her such love that she ruled as she would both him and his household. And one day it chanced that he said that from his youth up he had been desirous of journeying to Jerusalem, and would have her mind on the matter. She, who asked naught but to please him, said: "Dear husband, since God has been pleased to give us no children, and has granted us to enjoy a sufficiency of worldly wealth, it would be much to my liking that we should use a part of it in making this sacred journey; for go where you may, I am determined never to leave you." At this the good man was so contented that already he deemed himself on the top of Calvary.

And while their talk ran on this, there came to Court a gentleman who had often been in the wars against the Turks, and was now forwarding with the King an enterprise against one of their towns, which being taken would be greatly to the advantage of Christendom

And the old gentleman asked him about his journey. And when he had heard what the intent of it was, he inquired whether, after this had been accomplished, he had any purpose of making another to Jerusalem, whither he and his wife had a great desire to go. The captain was much pleased to hear of their intent, and undertook to conduct them thither, and to keep the affair secret. Then the time seemed long to the husband, till he should find his good wife and tell her of these passages, since she had no less desire to achieve the pilgrimage than he. And on that account she often held parley with the captain, who, paying more regard to her than to her words, fell so deep in love that often in his talk of sea-voyages he would confound Marseilles with the Archipelago, and meaning to say ship would say horse, like one who is ravished out of his senses; yet he found her of such a complexion that he durst not make any sign. And this concealment bred such an inward fire, that he would often fall sick, in which case the good lady was as careful of him, her guide, as of a roadside cross; and would visit him so frequently that he, perceiving her to have a regard for him, was cured without need of medicaments beside. But certain folk, knowing the captain as rather famed for a brave and courtly comrade than a good Christian, marvelled within themselves how this pious lady could make such account of him. And seeing him to have quite changed his manner of living, and to often go to churches, sermons, and confession, they had a suspicion that all this was to the end that thereby he might gain the lady's favour, and could not restrain themselves from saying as much to him. Whereupon the captain, fearing that if anything of this came to her ears he should

be banished from her presence, said to her and her husband that he was soon to be despatched by the King on his journey, and that he had several things for their hearing; but, to the intent that their own undertaking might be kept secret, he was fain not to hold parley with him and his wife in a public manner, and therefore entreated them to send for him when they were both gone to bed. And this the gentleman found reasonable, and failed not every evening to go to rest in good time.

And when all their people were gone to bed, they would send for the captain, and make their plans for the journey to Jerusalem, in the midst of which, from sheer devotion, the husband would often go to sleep. The captain, seeing the old gentleman asleep, and himself sitting on a chair near to her whom he held for the fairest and most virtuous woman in the world, was so cut to the heart by his dread and desire of speaking that he would often altogether lose the power of speech. But, lest the lady should see something of this, he would set himself to talk about the holy places of Jerusalem, where were such signs of the love Christ Jesus had towards us. And so by his talk of this love he concealed his own, looking upon the lady with sighs and tears, of which she understood nothing. But, beholding his devout visage, she held him for so holy a man, that she prayed him tell her what path it was he had taken, and by what means he had come to this so great love of God. He thereupon made the following declaration:—"He was a poor gentleman who, that he might attain to riches and honour, had forgotten his conscience, and had taken to wife a woman nearly akin to him by blood, for that she had great wealth, though

she was old and ugly, and he loved her not; and when he had spent all her substance he had gone to sea to look for adventures, and had done so much by his toil that he was come to a good and honourable estate. But since he had been of her acquaintance, she, herself, had been the cause, by her holy words and good ensample, of a change in the manner of his life. And that above all he was determined, if he came back from his present enterprise, to take her husband and herself to Jerusalem; to satisfy in some sort his grievous sins past, which he had now brought to a close, save that he had not yet made satisfaction to his wife, but yet had good hope of soon being reconciled with her." All this discourse was mighty pleasant to the lady, but above all she rejoiced, inasmuch as she had drawn such a man to the love and fear of God. And until he set forth from Court, these long parleys continued each and every evening, without his ever opening his mind to her. And he gave her as a gift a crucifix, praying her that whenever she looked upon it she would be mindful of him.

So the hour of his departure drew nigh, and when he had taken leave of the husband, who was falling asleep, he came to bid farewell to the lady, in whose eyes he saw tears, for the honourable friendship she bore him. But this made his passion to be so unbearable, for that he might not make it manifest, that in bidding her farewell he fell, as if he had been a-swoon, into so great a sweat, that not only his eyes but his whole body seemed to pour forth tears. And so, without a word, he departed; and the lady marvelled greatly, for such a sign of regret she had never before seen. All the same for this she did not change her good opinion, and always

remembered him in her orisons. But at the end of a month, as she was returning to her lodging, she fell in with a gentleman who gave her a letter from the captain, entreating her to read it by herself, and said that he had gone on board, well determined to accomplish something pleasing to the King and of service to Christendom; and as for himself, he was come back from Marseilles to put the affairs of the captain in order. And the lady went apart to a window, and opening the letter found it to be two sheets of paper covered on either side; and this was the manner of it:—

"My long delay and silence have left none,
Or hope or means of consolation,
Save that I speak and tell you all my mind,
And of the thoughts that are therein enshrined.
And now that I am all alone, and far
From you my hope, and have no guiding star
To rule the course; needs must the words should go
And strive for me, since verily no moe
My eyes behold her who was all my life;
Go, then, good letter, and make plain the strife
And clamours of my heart; for if I keep
Them close concealed, then to my last long sleep
I shall begone. O all too ready wit!
That wast most fearful, and the cause of it
Whereby I spoke not to you; for I thought
Better to die in silence than give aught
Of grief to her I love, and was content
That for her good my poor life should be spent.
But yet again—what if I die and give
Some pain to her for whom alone I live?
And this my promise was most certainly
That when the present toil was happily
Come to fulfilment, then I would fare back
And guide your footsteps on the sacred track;
Until at last you made your orison
Upon that holy mountain named Sion.

But if I die no hand shall lead you there,
And seeing this, I will by no means dare
To bring to nothing what is next your heart.
And this thing done that holds us now apart
I will return and live then for your sake,
But doing so my heart is forced to make
Confession of my love, that it is sore.
O words most daring, fearful now no more,
What would you do? Or are you fain to show
The greatness of my love? Then you must know
You have not power to tell the thousandth part ;
But tell her this, her eyes have used my heart
In such sort that it takes its life alone
From her, unto such languor hath it grown.
Alas! poor words and faint,
It is not yours to show her the constraint
Her eyes have on my heart. At least say this,
Her high regard so strong and mighty is,
That in her presence all words went astray,
And day was night, and night was full noon-day.
And when I fain would speak of my desire,
My words did run upon the Northern Fire.
And also say: my fear of thy displeasure,
This shut my lips, this put a bound and measure
Upon our parley, and my supreme love
Full well deserving note in Heaven above,
For it in virtue had foundation,
Hence should not be a secret benison,
But open glory, being that your attire
Is always virtue, wherefore my desire
Is virtuous likewise. No light love have I
Bottomed on beauty that one day must die ;
Much less in me doth dwell of lust the flame
That would for pleasure work you sin and shame.
I had much rather die in this adventure
Than know your honour less by my calenture.
But if your love I have not, and can't gain,
It shall be my contentment to remain
Your faithful servant, till once more I see

My mistress, and with great humility
Do her my service. And if nothing more
Fall to my lot, I shall at least adore
You as my goddess, wherefore doth arise
From off the altar of my sacrifice
The savour of a burning heart and soul.
And while the waters of the sea do roll
Betwixt us, that you may be of me sure
This diamond I send, as strong and pure
As is your heart; so to my joy and pleasure
I would you make this jewel fitly measure
Your whitest finger. Wherefore, diamond, say,
A lover sends me here from far away.
In steadfast hope some great renown to gain
Whereby unto your favour he'd attain."

And having read this from beginning to end she was much astounded at the captain's love, since she had never had any suspicion thereof. And seeing the beauty of the diamond and the ring of black enamel, she was in great perplexity as to what she should do with it. But after considering the matter through the whole night, she was very glad not to have any opportunity of giving him an answer, since she thought there was no need to add this trouble of an unfavourable reply to the charges of the King's he had in hand; and so, although she was resolved to refuse him, she left it till his return. Yet was the diamond a great perplexity to her, for she was not accustomed to adorn herself at the expense of any but her husband. Wherefore, being of a good understanding, she determined to draw from the jewel some profit to the captain's conscience, and so despatched a servant of hers to his wife, pretending that the letter she sent by him was written by a nun of Tarrascon. And the letter was to this intent:

"Mistress, your husband a short while before he

embarked passed by here; and after making confession of his sins and receiving his Creator like a good Christian, he told me a thing that was on his conscience—namely, the sorrow he had for that he had not loved you as he ought. And, at parting, he prayed and implored me to send you this letter and the diamond, which he will have you keep for the love of him, assuring you that if God grant him a safe return from his journey, no wife shall be more kindly entreated than you; and this stone of steadfastness shall be security for him. I pray you remember him in your prayers, since in mine he shall have a place for the remainder of my days."

So, when this letter was finished and signed with the nun's name, it was sent by the lady to the captain's wife. And when the good old woman saw the letter and the ring, one need not ask how she wept with joy and regret at being loved by her husband, when she could no longer see him. And kissing the ring more than a thousand times, and watering it with her tears, she blessed God for that he had brought back to her the love of her husband, now at the end of her days, when she had thought it altogether lost to her. And she gave good thanks also to the nun, who had done so much for her, and made her the best answer she could. This the serving-man bore back to his mistress, who was not able to read it, or listen to what he told her, without much laughter. And so contented was she to have profitably got rid of the diamond to the reunion of the captain and his wife, that she would not for a kingdom have done otherwise.

A short while after there came tidings of the defeat and death of the poor captain; how he was deserted of

them that should have borne him aid, and his enterprises revealed by the men of Rhodes, who above all should have kept it secret. All those who had landed, and they were eighty, were killed; among them being a gentleman named John, and a Turk who had the devout lady for his godmother, when he was baptised, and both of whom she had sent on this journey with the captain. The former of these was killed hard-by the captain, and the Turk, with fifteen arrow wounds, saved himself by swimming to the French vessels. And by him alone was learned the truth of the whole affair—namely, that a gentleman, whom the captain had taken for his comrade and familiar friend, having done him good service with the King and the nobles of France, as soon as he saw that the captain was landed, went back with his ships to deep water. And when the captain saw that his enterprise was discovered, and that more than four thousand Turks were at hand, he began to retreat. But the gentleman in whom he had such trust seeing that, by his death, he would get the whole charge and profit of this great armament, called to him all the captains and addressed them to the effect that it was not right to make hazard of the King's ships and the brave men in them, for the sake only of eighty or a hundred; and they, in whom there was no courage, held to this opinion. And the captain, seeing that the more he called to them the farther did they go, turned again upon the Turks, and though he stood in sand up to his knees, so valiantly did he do battle, that it seemed as if he was about to defeat all the host of his enemies, of which his traitorous comrade had more fear than hope. At last, despite his valour, he received so many wounds from those who durst not approach nearer than

bow-shot distance, that he began to lose blood. Whereupon, seeing the weakness of these true Christian men, the Turks came upon them with the scimitar; nevertheless, as God gave them strength, they fought unto the end. The captain called the gentleman named John, whom his mistress had entrusted to him, and the Turk also; and fixing the point of his sword in the earth, fell on his knees before it, kissing and embracing the cross, and saying thus: "Lord, take into Thy hands the soul of one who hath given his life for the exaltation of Thy name." The gentleman named John, seeing by these words that life was failing him, took him and the sword which he held into his arms, to the intent that he might give him aid; but a Turk cut through both his thighs from behind, and crying, with a loud voice: "We go, captain, to Paradise, and there shall behold Him for whom we died," he became the captain's comrade in death as he had been in life. The Turk, perceiving that he could do no service to the one or the other, and having fifteen wounds from arrows, turned to the ships and demanded to be taken on board. But this, although he alone was left of eighty, the captain's traitorous companion refused him; but being an exceeding good swimmer, he went on till he was taken up by a small ship, and after some time was cured of his wounds. And by means of this poor stranger the truth was made known, altogether to the honour of the dead captain, and to the disgrace of his companion. And the King and all honourable men, when they heard the report, esteemed his wickedness so great that they thought he deserved death, howsoever a cruel one it might be. But when he came, he spread abroad so many lying rumours and bribes that not only did he escape punishment, but

received the office of him the latchet of whose shoes he was not worthy to unloose.

And when these pitiful tidings were brought to Court, the Regent, who had great liking for the captain, was mighty sorry; so likewise was the King and all of his fellowship. And she whom he loved best of all hearing the strange, pitiful, and Christian manner of his death, changed the chiding she intended to have given him into tears and lamentations, wherein her husband bore her company, for he thereby lost all hope of journeying to Jerusalem. I would not forget that a maiden who lived in their household and loved the gentleman named John, on the very day on which the two were slain, came to her mistress and told her she had dreamed that her lover, all clad in white apparel, had come to bid her farewell, and that he and the captain were in Paradise.[1] But when she knew that this dream was the truth, she was in such grief that her mistress had enough to do to console her. At the end of some time the Court went to Normandy, where the captain had lived, whereupon his widow failed not to come and do her reverence to the Regent. And to the end that she might lead her into the Presence, the widow addressed herself to the lady whom her husband had loved so much. And while

[1] There was no firmer believer in the truth of dreams than Margaret. She relates in her letters how, at the time the king's little daughter, Charlotte, died, before the news could reach him, Francis, under the walls of Pavia, three nights running, beheld her in a dream, and saw the beautiful sorrow of farewell on her angelic face, and heard her cry three times, "Adieu, mon Roy, je voys en Paradis." And when her brother died, before any dared to tell her the heavy news, Margaret divined it from a dream she had, in which the King appeared to her. Again, in later years, when Margaret was dying, in great heaviness of spirit, one night her melancholy was consoled by the dream of a beautiful woman clad in white, holding out in her hand a wreath of singular unearthly flowers, which appeared to Margaret the promise of immortality.

they were awaiting the appointed hour in a church, the widow began bewailing and praising her husband, saying, among other things: "Alas! madam, mine is the greatest woe that ever befel a wife, for when he was beginning to love me more than he had ever done, God took him from me." So saying she showed her the ring which, as a sign of his perfect love, she wore on her finger, and all this with many tears. Thereupon the lady, notwithstanding the grief she felt, was so fain to laugh for the happy issue of her deceit, that she could not bring the widow into the Presence, but entrusted her to some one else, and betook herself to a side-chapel until her laughing fit was over.

"Methinks, ladies, that those to whom like things are given, should use them in like manner, for they will find out that to do good is pleasant. So one should not accuse this lady of deceit, but rather esteem her sense, which turned to good a thing which was worth nothing." "Call you," said Nomerfide, "a rare diamond of two hundred crowns worth nothing? I would have you assured that, if it had fallen into my hands, neither his wife nor his kinsfolk should have got so much as a sight of it. There is nothing which appertaineth more strictly to any one than that which is given. The gentleman was dead, none knew of it, and she would not have made the poor old lady shed so many tears." "In good faith," said Hircan, "you are in the right, for there are certain women who, to show themselves for better than they really are, do good deeds openly against their natural complexion, for we all know that nothing is as covetous as a woman. All the same their vanity oftentimes gets the mastery over their covetousness, and then they are forced to do things which go

sorely against the grain. And I believe that she who sent the diamond away was not worthy of wearing it." "Not so fast, prithee," said Oisille,[1] "I suspect I know who she is, wherefore, I entreat you, condemn her not without a hearing." "Mistress," replied Hircan, "I do not condemn her; but if the gentleman was as virtuous as you say, she would be honoured by having such a lover, but perchance one less worthy than he had her so tight by the finger that the ring could not get on." "Verily," said Ennasuitte, "she would have done well to have kept it, since no one was advised thereof." "What," said Geburon, "if only no one is advised thereof, are all things lawful to lovers?"

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"What, Geburon," said Hircan, "since when have you turned preacher? Such was not aforetime the manner of your discourse." "It is true," replied Geburon, "that I have just now spoken the very opposite to the deliverances of my whole life; but since I am grown old and my teeth are too weak to chew the venison, I advise the young deer to beware of the huntsmen, that I may give satisfaction in my old age for the sins of my youth." "We thank you, Geburon," said Nomerfide, "for that you have given us this advice for our profit, but we cannot hold ourselves under great obligation to you, since such was not the manner of your discourse to her whom you loved; it is a sign therefore that you love us not, and do not wish that we should ever be loved. Yet we deem ourselves to the full as wise and virtuous as those whom you ran after

[1] I suspect that the young and pretty heroine of this story, married to a man much older than herself, is a portrait of Louise de Savoie in her youth. "The lady hath ever been of my acquaintance," says Parlamente, who tells the tale.

in your youth, but it is ever the boast of old men that they were more prudent than those who come after them." "Yet, Nomerfide," said Geburon, "when the deceit of one of your lovers hath made you to understand the wickedness of men; in that hour will you believe that I have spoken the truth?" Oisille said to Geburon: "It seems to me that the gentleman whom you praise so much for his courage ought rather to be praised for the madness of his love, which is so strong a power that it maketh the most pitiful cowards in the world undertake things on which the bravest would think twice." "It seems to me," said Hircan, "that since you do not esteem the courage of him praiseworthy, you doubtless know some other deed of the same kind more worthy of praise." "It is true," said Oisille, "that he is praiseworthy, but I know of one more admirably brave." "I beseech you then," said Geburon, "to take my place and tell us of him." Oisille began: "What will you call one, who, for no necessity laid upon him but from true and inborn courage, did the deed I am about to tell you?"

## NOVEL XVII.

*King Francis shows his courage that it is well approved.*

There came to Dijon, in the duchy of Burgundy, a German count named William,[1] of the House of Saxe,

[1] This story takes place in the July of 1521, when Count William of Furstenburg was at the Court of Dijon. Brantôme has dedicated a discourse to this good and valiant captain, who would have been (as he remarks) esteemed still better and still braver had he not been so light of faith, so fond of money, and so fond of plunder. "He served King Francis six or seven years, and always with excellent soldiers, never less than six or seven thousand men; but after so long a service (or rather pillage and plunder, to tell the truth) he fell into suspicion of desiring to

which is so near akin to the House of Savoy that of old they were one. This count, being esteemed the bravest and most handsome gentleman in Germany, having offered his service to the King of France, was so well received of him that not only did he accept him as a follower, but kept him close at hand as a servant of the Body. Now my Lord de la Tremoille, governor of Burgundy,[1] the same being an ancient knight and loyal

attempt the person of the King—as it is written in the Hundred Novels of the Queen of Navarre." . . . In later days Count William repented, and Margaret appears to have forgiven him. She writes to her brother in 1536: "Count William entreats me to tell you that there is indeed a difference between the shameful purgatory of Italy and the glorious paradise of your camp, and has told me such things of his past misdeeds as I would rather he than I related to you."

[1] This was the Prince of Talmont, Louis II. de la Trémouille, known to his generation as the *chevalier sans reproche*. He was the son of Marguerite d'Amboise and Louis I. de la Trémouille, and came of some of the best blood in France. He was born in 1460, and in 1488, at the momentous battle of St Aubin, he conquered in the king's name the rebel troops of Orleans and Brittany, and the nobles in revolt. The story goes that, on the evening of the battle, De la Trémouille invited to a great supper his illustrious captives: Orleans, Orange, &c., and all their captains. Towards the end of the feast two monks appeared, and pallor overspread the faces of the banqueting princes. "Calm yourselves," cried De la Trémouille, "the king disposes of *you*, my lords. But you, you lesser captains, who have broken your oath and your allegiance, set now your consciences in order." Short shrift had these unhappy soldiers; and before the summer dawn arose the last of them was dead. . . . This story does not seem exactly in harmony with the character of a *chevalier sans reproche*, and one is pleased to find it has no better origin than the Latin History of Louis XII., in Godefroi. It was Louis de la Trémouille who, in the invasion of Italy under Charles VIII., associated himself with Ligny and Piennes in the disastrous policy of forming a protectorate in central Italy, headed by Pisa and Siena. This was a bold and spirited scheme, but it all fell into tragic ruin, from causes too difficult to be expounded here; yet, in 1495, the scheme seemed possible enough, and, in his pursuit of it, De la Trémouille found himself in the same party with the very Duke of Orleans whom he had taken prisoner seven years ago.

servant to the King, was always jealous and fearful of his master, and had spies on all hands, that he might know the counsels of the enemies of the King, and so well did he conduct matters that few things were hid from him. And he was advertised by one of his friends that Count William had received a sum of money, with assurance of more, to the intent that he might in any way cause the King to be murdered. Whereupon my lord de la Tremoille did forthwith advise the King of it, and did not conceal it from his mother, Louise de Savoye, who forgetting that she and this German were akin, implored the King straightway to dismiss him. But the King would have her speak no more of it, saying it was impossible for so good and honourable a gentleman to have undertaken so evil an enterprise. At the end of some time there came a second tidings concerning him to the same intent as the first, at which the governor, burning with love for his master, demanded that he should be sent from his service and banished the realm, or that some manner of order should be taken with him. But the King straightly charged him that he should make no sign, being well persuaded that by some other means he should come to a knowledge of the truth.

And one day, on which he was going a hunting, he took out the best sword that he had, and bade Count William follow hard after him; and after chasing the stag for some time, the King, seeing that all his people were far off, and that the Count alone was with him,

Three years more, and Orleans ascended the throne of France as Louis XII. It was a trying instant for those who had held him in captivity; but: "The king forgets the injuries of Orleans!" cried Louis XII., and in 1501 he made De la Trémouille governor of Burgundy. He fell fighting at Pavia.

turned aside from all the tracks. And when he saw himself alone with the Count in the very depths of the forest, drawing his sword he said to him: "Does this sword seem to you both good to look upon and serviceable withal?" The Count, handling the point, said he had seen none to overmatch it. "You are in the right," said the King, "and methinks if a man was resolved to kill me, and knew the strength of my arm and the stoutness of my heart, and the goodness of this sword here, he would think twice before having at me; nevertheless, I should hold him for a pitiful scoundrel if we were all alone, without witnesses, and he durst not carry out what he durst conceive." To which Count William, with an astounded countenance, replied: "Sire, the wickedness of such an undertaking would be very great, but the folly of putting it into execution would be no less." The King, with a laugh, put back the sword into the sheath, and hearing the chase hard by, pricked after it as fast as he was able. When he was come up he spoke to no one on the matter, being assured that Count William, though a brave enough gentleman, was not competent for such an enterprise. But the Count, believing that he was found out or at the least suspected, came early on the next morning to Robertet, the King's treasurer,[1] saying that

[1] This Robertet, treasurer in 1521, was the old secretary of Charles VIII. in Italy. He died in 1522. Few ministers have had more power than Florimond Robertet — a man cautious, experienced, and trusted. In Italy he was of the prudent party: the party of Commines, of Bisconnet and Gié, opposed to the youthful daring of Ligny and De la Trémouille. Readers of Commines' memoirs and of the diplomatic negotiations of the time are familiar with the name of Robertet. He amassed a decent wealth in the king's service, bought several estates, and at his death left a son, Jacques, who succeeded to his power, his position, and his prudence.

he had considered the privileges and pay the King was willing to give him to stay in his service, and they did not suffice him for the half of a year. And if it was not the King's pleasure to give him double, he should be constrained to depart. And he prayed the said Robertet to ascertain as soon as might be the will of the King, who said that he could do him no better service than go to the King forthwith. And he did this willingly, since he had seen the advices of the governor. So when the King was awake he failed not to tell him what the Count had said, my lord de la Tremoille and Admiral de Bonnivet[1] being present. But they knew not that which the King had done the day before. So with a laugh the King said: "You were desirous of dismissing Count William, and behold he dismisses himself! Wherefore tell him that, since he is not content with the estate to which he agreed when he entered my service, than which estate many a man of a noble house desires nothing better, it is reasonable that he seek his fortune somewhere else. And as for me I will put no let nor hindrance in his way, but shall be glad if he find a place according to his deserts." Robertet was as quick to carry back this reply to the Count as he had been to carry the Count's complaint to the King. And the Count said that, with his good

[1] The Admiral de Bonnivet was the most daring and the most brilliant of the companions of Francis. Margaret speaks of him as young, valiant, handsome, rich, wellnigh irresistible, in the third novel of the "Heptameron," which relates his audacious and futile attempt upon her honour. I have sometimes thought that Bonnivet might be the Amadour (amador—lover) of the tenth novel. There is no doubt that he was in love with Margaret, and she expressly admits that it needed more than human strength and virtue to enable her to resist him. Bonnivet was still in the flower of his youth when he fell in the desperate battle of Pavia.

pleasure, he was determined immediately to set forth. And as one whom fear makes to begone, it was not more than twenty-four hours from thence that he took leave of the King, as he was sitting at table, feigning to regret greatly that his poverty forced him away. Likewise he took leave of the mother of the King, who gave him leave as joyful as her welcome, when he came to her as a kinsman and a friend; and so returned he to his own land. But the King, perceiving his mother and his followers astonished at this sudden parting, told them of the fright he had given him, saying that though he were innocent of what was laid against him, yet his fear was too great for him to stay with a master whose complexion he knew no longer.

"As for me, ladies, I see not what could have moved the heart of the King to make hazard of his life with a man of such repute at arms, except that, leaving the company and the places where Kings find none to give them battle, he wished to meet fairly and equally him whom he suspected for an enemy, in order to make trial of the stoutness of his own heart and the courage of it." "Without doubt," said Parlamente, "he was in the right, for the praises of all men cannot so well satisfy a good heart as the knowledge and experience that it hath indeed virtue implanted in it by God." "It is a long while ago," said Geburon, "since the men of old feigned that if any one would attain the Temple of Renown, he must first pass through the Temple of Virtue. And I, who know the two persons, of whom you have made us this relation, am well persuaded that the King is one of the bravest men in his realm." "By my faith," said Hircan, "when Count William came to France I should have had more fear of his sword than that of the four

shrewdest Italian gentlemen who were at Court." "We know well," said Ennasuitte, "so great is his renown, that no praises of ours can equal his merit, and that the day would be too soon gone if each should speak his mind. Wherefore I pray you, mistress, to give your vote to one who will tell us some good of men, if there be any good to be told. It is a short time since a story was told me to the praise of a gentleman, his love, firmness, and long-suffering, that I fear not to lose the recollection of it.

* * * * * *

"If you know a history to that intent," said Hircan, "I give you my place for you to tell it." "I both know one," said Ennasuitte, "and most willingly will tell it."

## NOVEL XIX.

*A pitiful case of two lovers who turn at last monk and nun.*

In the time of that Marquis of Mantua, who had for wife the sister of the Duke of Ferrara,[1] there lived in the house of the marchioness a maiden called Pauline. And she was loved in such wise by a gentleman in the service of the marquis that all men were amazed at the greatness of his love, inasmuch as though of poor estate he was handsome, and should, through the love his

[1] Giovan Francesco Gonzaga, Marquis of Mantua, married, in 1490, Isabella d'Este, daughter of Ercole of Ferrara. The Marquis of Mantua, like his brother-in-law of Ferrara, served the French with devoted fervour, until the unjust seizure of Peschiera by his allies estranged him, and sent him in revolt and indignation to offer his service to the Emperor. M. le Roux de Lincy believes that the Italian colour of this story is merely a disguise, bu in view of the continual intercourse between France and the

master bore him, have espoused some lady of wealth. But he, being assured that the greatest treasure in the world was Pauline, trusted to gain her for his own in marriage. The marchioness, wishing that by her countenance Pauline might make a more profitable match, looked with disfavour on the scheme, often charging them not to speak to one another, and warning them that if they were wed they would be in all Italy the poorest couple and the most wretched. But to these counsels the young gentleman paid no heed, and Pauline, though she strove to conceal the love she bore him, yet none the less had him in her thoughts. And this fellowship of theirs lasted for a long while, their only hope being that time would bring them better fortune. But it chanced that war broke out, in which the young gentleman was taken prisoner, together with a Frenchman, whose love for a lady in his own land was as great as the other's love for one in Italy. And these, finding themselves partakers of the same fate, began to tell their secrets one to the other, the Frenchman confessing that his own heart was a fast prisoner, though he told him not the name of its prison-house. But since they were both in the following of the Marquis of Mantua, the Frenchman was well assured of the love his comrade bore to Pauline, and out of the friendship he had for him advised him to banish her from his thoughts. But this, the young Italian swore, lay not within his power, saying that if in recompense of his good service and captivity his lord would not give him the maid to wife, he would presently turn

North Italian States in the sixteenth century, I can see no reason for adopting this suggestion. It is different to the case of the tenth novel, where Margaret frankly admits having changed the locality.

monk, and do suit and service to no master save God. This his comrade could not believe, discerning in him no devotion or sign of devotion, except it were that which he bore to Pauline. At the end of nine months the French gentleman was enlarged from his captivity, and by his efforts procured likewise the freedom of his friend, using also his good offices with the marquis and marchioness in the matter of the marriage of Pauline. But from this the two lovers gained nothing save warnings of the poverty in which they would both have to live; their parents moreover on both sides were against the match, and forbade him to speak to her any more, to the end that his great love might be overcome by absence and want of opportunity.

And so this man, seeing that he was obliged to obey, prayed of the marchioness to let him take leave of Pauline, and promised that after he had done so he would never speak to her again. This was granted him, and at the appointed time, being come into her presence, he spoke as follows: "Since, Pauline, it seems that heaven and earth are against us, not only in prohibiting us to wed, but what is worse, in disallowing us sight and speech of one another—an order which our lord and lady have laid so strictly upon us that they may truly boast of having broken two hearts with a single word, hereby showing mighty well that they neither have nor have had bowels of love nor compassion—I am well advised that their aim in this is to marry each of us honourably and to advantage, for they know not that contentment is the only true riches; yet with so much misfortune and unhappiness have they affected me, that I can no more heartily do them any service. I know also that if I had never spoken of marriage

they would not have been so careful as to forbid us to speak together, but I promise you I would rather die than follow a less honourable love than that with which I have loved you, from whom I have won that which I would defend from all. Since then, if I continued to see you, I could not restrain myself from speech; and if I saw you not, my heart, unable to remain empty, would be filled with some awful despair; I have determined, and this for some time, to enter the religious life, for though I know that salvation may be gained by all sorts and conditions of men, yet I would have more leisure in which I may contemplate the Divine Goodness and implore it to have pity upon the sins of my youth, and so to change my heart that it may love spiritual things no less than it has hitherto loved temporal things. And if by grace I obtain grace, my task shall be to pray without ceasing to God for you. And by that strong and loyal love which has been between us, I implore you to remember me in your prayers to our Lord, entreating Him to give me a resolution not to see you, as great as the delight I took in seeing you. Moreover, since throughout my whole life I have hoped to gain you in marriage, and have been satisfied with hope, now, since that is lost to me, and I shall never have from you the love that a wife gives to her husband, this one thing I ask, that in bidding me farewell you will treat me as a brother and give me a kiss." Poor Pauline, whose favours had always been few and far between, perceiving the bitterness of his grief, and his honour in making so reasonable a request in all his great despair, without saying another word threw her arms around his neck and wept after such a grievous fashion

that words, voice, and strength failed her, and she fell between his arms in a swoon. Whereupon her lover, overcome by pity, love, and grief, must needs do the like, and falling one one way, the other another, they lay for dead till one of Pauline's companions saw them and came to the rescue.

Then Pauline, who had wished to conceal her love, was ashamed, because she had made manifest how strong it was, but yet her pity for the poor gentleman served as a good excuse. For he, not able to endure the saying of that everlasting farewell, went forth from her presence, and going unto his own house flung himself upon the bed, and passed the night in such pitiful complaining that his servants thought that he had lost his parents, and his friends, and whatsoever he had on earth. In the morning he commended himself to our Lord, and after he had divided amongst his servants what little worldly gear he possessed, and taken with him a small sum of money, he charged his people not to follow him, and departed by himself to the religious house of the Observance, to demand the cowl, being well determined never to go from that house for the rest of his life. The warden, who had formerly known him, thought at first that he was either being laughed at or that he was in a dream, for in all that land there was none who did less resemble a Grey Friar, since in him was found every honour and every virtue which one could desire in a perfect gentleman. Yet the warden, on hearing of his words, and beholding the streams of tears that flowed (for what cause he knew not) down his face, took him in and entreated him kindly. And soon after, marking his perseverance, he gave him the monastic dress, which having been received

by this gentleman with great devotion, the thing was brought to the marquis and marchioness, who, greatly astonished, could scarcely believe it possible. Pauline, to hide her love, concealed as well as might be the regret she felt for him, and in such wise that all men said that she had soon forgotten her loyal lover and his devotion for her. And so were passed five or six months, and she gave no sign of the grief that was in her soul. But it fell out that one day she was shown by some monks a song which her lover had made a short while after he had taken the cowl. As to the air 'tis an Italian one, and ordinary enough, but I have tried to English the words as nearly as I can, and this is the manner of it; but first the burthen:

What will she say, when clad in sober guise
Monasticall
I pass before the eyes
That were my all?

Alas, dear maid, when thou art all alone
And tear on tear
Shall rise for me, and many a bitter moan
For our mishap; wise thoughts may lead thee where
The cloister is a walk for solitude,
And high built walls shut out all tumult rude.
What will she say, &c.

What will they say, who our love-dream have broken
And our estate:
By whose decree our vows were left unspoken?
When by their hate
They see a love more pure, a flame more holy
They shall repent, and kneeling lowly,
Bewail with sobs and tears
Our saddened years.
What will she say, &c.

But if they come and with a vain endeavour
Do ask us to arise,
And from this holy watch would fain dissever
Our hearts and eyes,
Then shall we say that till our days are ending,
And to its Lord each soul is wending;
These walls that circle round
Shall be our bound.
What will she say, &c.

And if they come, and say to us "Go marry
And be you blythe and gay,
Your lives are young, but Time will not long tarry
And hasteneth fast away,"
Then shall we say that all our love and duty
Are His with whom is perfect beauty.
Our marriage is above,
For there is Love.
What will she say, &c.

O mighty love, O passion and desire
That bound the cord,
Enflame within my heart a ceaseless fire
To pray the Lord.
All through the watches, patient without sorrow,
Till Prime doth come of that to-morrow
Which hath no twilight grey,
But morn alway.
What will she say, &c.

Quit wealth, and all contentments of this life,
They're but a chain,
Stronger than steel to forge us fast to strife,
Our souls to bane.
Quit then the flesh and all its giddy pleasure
Mad without measure.
What will she say, &c.

Come then and don with me that holiness
The Lord doth give;

For though the robe 's ash-grey, yet none the less
We thrive and live ;
And like the phœnix shall one day aspire
From out these ashes of our fire.
What will she say, &c.

And seeing our love showed pure, and had no stain
To men before ;
Much greater praise we doubtless shall attain
Since we adore
In cloistered walls the Lord of Life and Glory,
Till when the end comes to our story
Love that could never die
Shall lift our souls on high.
What will she say, &c.

And when, being by herself in a side-chapel, she had carefully read through these verses, so plentifully did she weep that all the paper was wetted with her tears. And had it not been for the fear she was in of too evidently manifesting her affection, she would straightway have turned hermit, and looked her last on the face of mankind. But the prudence to which her mind was attempered made her for some time conceal her intent, and though she was steadfastly purposed to leave the world behind her, she feigned the very opposite of this, and so joyous was she become in company that she would hardly have been known for her former self. For five or six months she kept this secret covered in her heart. But having one day gone with her mistress to the Church of the Observance to High Mass, she saw, as the celebrant, deacon, and sub-deacon came from the sacristy to the high altar, her poor lover, who had not yet completed the year of his noviciate, preceding them as server, carrying in his hands the two flagons covered with silk cloth, and with eyes bent on

to the ground. When Pauline saw him in this sad weed, that did but increase his grace and beauty, she was in such trouble and affray that, simulating a rheum in the throat, she coughed so as to hide the blushes of her face. And her lover, who knew that sound better than his monastery chimes, turned not his head, but as he passed in front of her could not restrain his eyes from going the road they had so often gone before. But at that most piteous regard of his he was seized in such wise by the fire he thought to have extinguished, that striving to conceal it more than he was able, he fell full length before his mistress. Yet for the fear he had of the cause being known, he professed that in the place where he fell the floor was broken and uneven. And Pauline, perceiving that though his dress was changed his heart was the same as it had been, and likewise that such a time had gone by since he had become a monk that all men would deem she had forgotten him, set herself to bring that to pass which she had desired—namely, to make their two lives as like one another in dress, estate, and manner of living as they had been aforetime when they abode in the same house under the same master and mistress. And since she had for more than four months before taken such order as was necessary previous to becoming a nun, she one morning entreated leave of the marchioness to hear mass at St Claire's, which the marchioness, not knowing what was in her mind, freely granted. But as she passed the Grey Friars she asked the warden to let her see her lover, whom she called her kinsman, and when they had met in a side-chapel by themselves, Pauline thus spoke to him: "If my honour had allowed me to put on this dress as soon as you I would presently have

done it, but now, since I have, by not doing so, silenced the slanders of those who are always more ready to think evil than good, I am determined to take upon myself this robe, estate, and life of yours without inquiring of what kind they are. For if you are happy, I shall partake in your happiness, and if you are unhappy, in that too I am fain to have my share, for by whatsoever road you fare to Paradise I too would follow. For I am assured that He, who alone is worthy to be called the true and perfect Love, has drawn us to His service by a reasonable and honourable friendship which He, by the operation of His Holy Spirit, will turn wholly to Himself. And I beseech you, forgetting this vile and perishable body, to put on that of the true Spouse who is Jesus Christ." Her monkish lover was filled with such delight to hear her holy wishes that, weeping with joy, he strengthened her therein to the utmost of his power, telling her that since the pleasure of hearing her speak was the only one let to him, he deemed himself happy to live in a place where he might always see her; and that they, trusting in the goodness of God, in whose hands no one is suffered to perish, should pass the rest of their lives in a state of holy love. And with these words, weeping with joy, he made as if to kiss her hands, but she lowered her face to her hands, and in true love they gave to one another the kiss of peace. So in this joyful wise Pauline departed, and was received into the nunnery of St Claire, where she took the veil.

But when my lady the marchioness heard all this matter, she was much amazed, and fared on the morrow to the convent, and endeavoured to turn Pauline from her purpose, who replied that she must rest content with having deprived her of her husband in the flesh,

that man whom of all men she best loved, and not endeavour to sunder her from that spouse who is immortal and invisible, for it lay not within her power, nor that of any creature upon earth. Whereupon the marchioness, perceiving her intention was sincere, kissed her, and with a great grief left her. And for the rest of their days Pauline and her lover lived in such holiness and devotion, each one faithfully obeying the rules of the Order, that we cannot doubt that He whose law is Love said to them at the end of their lives, as to the Magdalen, "Your sins be forgiven you, for you have loved much."

"You cannot deny, ladies, that the love of this man was greater than that of his mistress, nevertheless so well was he recompensed that I would all true lovers were in case like his."

"Then," quoth Hircan, "there would be more foolish men and maids than there are now." "Call you those foolish," said Oisille, "who in their youth love with an honourable love, and end by turning it all to God?" Hircan, with a laugh, replied: "If black choler and despair are worthy of praise, then indeed Pauline and her lover stand beyond compare." "Is it not true," said Geburon, "that God draws us to Himself by ways which seem evil at the first, but the end whereof is good?" "Still do I persist in the opinion," said Parlamente, "that no man loveth God who has not loved with a perfect love one of His creatures." "What do you call a perfect love?" said Saffredent. "Do you mean those chilly souls that adore their ladies from afar, without discovering their thoughts?" "I," said Parlamente, "call those men perfect lovers who, when they love seek for some perfection, be it beauty, goodness, or gracious

ways; always striving towards virtuousness, and with hearts of such high aim that death is sweeter by far to them than the doing of a deed of shame. And this because the soul, which was created for nothing but to return to its sovereign good, while it is shut within the body, is ever longing to return thither. But seeing that the senses, through which we obtain our knowledge, can show us nothing nearer perfection than visible things (for through the sin of our first parent they are dull and heavy), the soul pursues these, thinking to find in a visible grace, and in the moral virtues, the ideal beauty, grace, and virtue. But having curiously gone through all these external things, and finding out amongst them that which it really loves, it passes on to others, even after the manner of a child, who, being young, loves dolls and other trifles, the prettiest that it happens to see, thinking a heap of pebbles to be great wealth. But as the child becomes a man he loves dolls that are alive, and veritable riches with which to purchase the goods of this world. So the soul, discovering by hard experience that there is no kind of perfection or happiness in things terrestrial, passes on from these and seeks Him from whom proceeds all perfection and happiness. All the same, did not God grant unto the seeker the eye of faith, it were likely that from being ignorant he should become an atheist; for it is faith alone that doth enable carnal and sensual man to apprehend the idea of the highest good." "Do you not perceive," said Longarine, "that the uncultivated soil that brings forth everything luxuriously is valued by men because, though what grows thereon is of no profit, they hope that when it has been tilled it will bear good fruit? But that man who hath no love for

carnal things will never attain to the love of God by the sowing of his word, since the soil of his heart is barren and will bring forth no fruit of love." "And what is the reason?" said Saffredent. "Is it not because the greater part of our teachers are not spiritual, but lovers of strong drink and nasty serving-maids, not trying what it is to love honourable ladies?" "If I could speak Latin," said Simontault, "I would read you that lesson of St John's: 'How shall he who loveth not his brother whom he hath seen, love God whom he hath not seen?' For, from the love of visible things, one is drawn to that of the invisible." "But," said Ennasuitte, "*quis est ille* so perfect as you say, *et laudabimus eum*." "There have been lovers," said Dagoucin, "who have loved with a love so strong and pure, that with them death itself were better than the feeling of the smallest desire against the honour of their ladies, and they do not even wish them to be advised of their love." "Then," said Saffredent, "they have the nature of a chameleon, that feeds on air. For there was never man born of woman that desired not to declare his love, and to know if he is beloved; and be this love-fever never so hot, if it be not returned, it will presently pass off."

At these words Parlamente put on her mask,[1] and with the rest walked home to evensong at church, where, though it was fully service-time, they found not so much as a single monk in the choir. And the reason of this was that the monks had heard how the company

[1] Parlamente meet son touret-de-nez: a little mask hiding only the brow and nose, worn by ladies of quality, partly for disguise, partly for ornament, partly for protection from the sun (the fan shading the mouth). In the MS. of *La Coche* all the ladies wear tourets-de-nez.

was wont to assemble in the meadow and there tell tales, and since they loved pleasure better than their prayers, they had all gone likewise to the meadow and hidden themselves in a ditch behind a thick hedge. And so good a listening had they given to the stories that they had not heard the monastery bell, and came in such haste that their breath well-nigh failed them as they began evensong. And when they were asked the reason why their chanting began late, and when it began was out of tune, they confessed the truth. So, seeing that they desired it, it was granted them that henceforth they should assist at these offices seated at their ease behind the hedge. Supper-time was spent merrily in uttering the things they had left unsaid in the meadow, and this lasted all through the evening, until Oisille entreated them to retire, that their wit might be the keener on the morrow after a good sleep, of which she said that an hour before midnight was better than three after. So parted the company, each one to his own room, and so came to an end the second day.

# DAY THE THIRD.

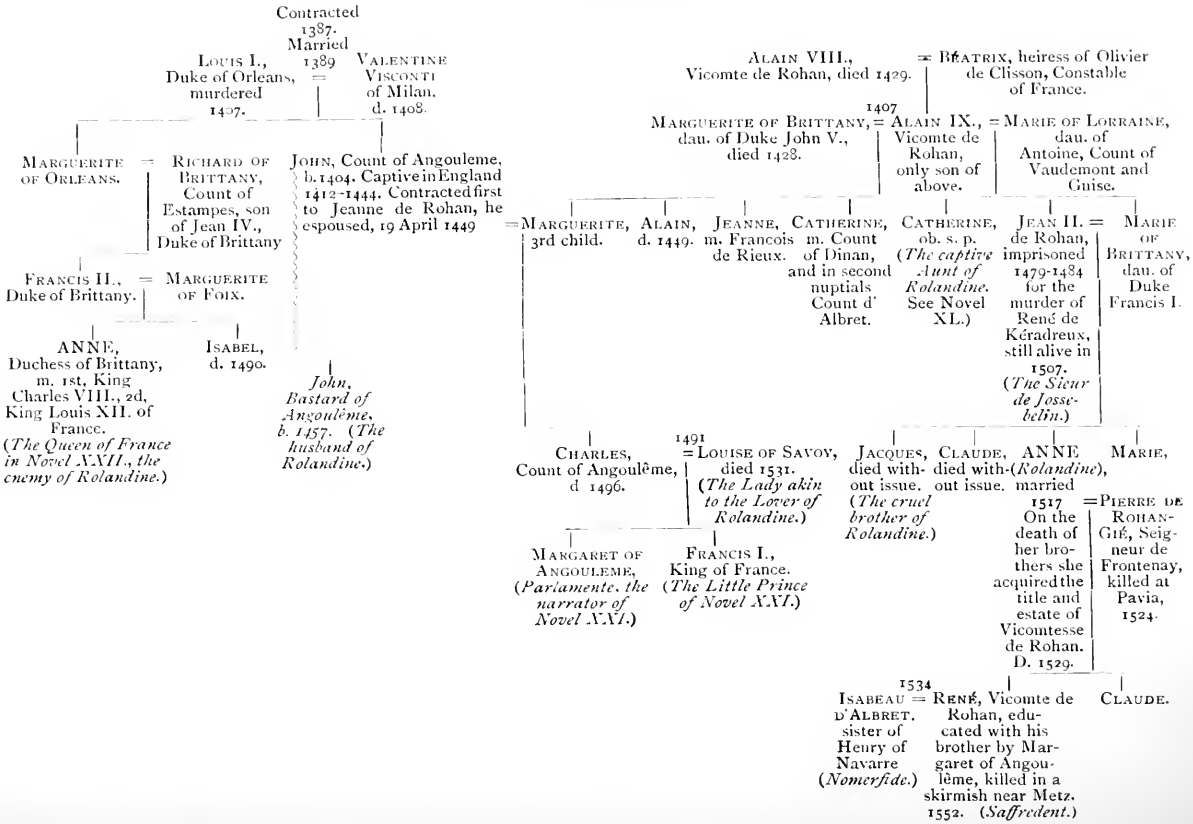
ON THE THIRD DAY RELATION IS MADE OF THE LADIES THAT HAVE HAD NO AIM BUT HONOUR, AND OF THE ABOMINABLE HYPOCRISY OF THE MONKS.

## PROLOGUE.

On the morrow they all arose early and came into the hall, but yet found Oisille there before them, she having been for the last half-hour in meditation on the Scripture she was to read. And if on the first and second days she gave them good matter of contentment, she did no less on the third. And had not one of the monks sought them out, that they might hear High Mass, they would not have heard it; for in such wise did they meditate that they made no account of the bell. And when they had with due devotion heard Mass, they dined very soberly, so as not by an excess of meats to prevent each one's memory quitting itself as well as might be. After this they went to their rooms to look at their note-books till the hour was come for going into the meadow, which was no long time. And those who had resolved on telling some merry case had already such pleasant faces that they gave promise of abundant laughter. When they were seated, they asked Saffredent to whom he would give his vote to begin the third day. "It seems to me," said he, "that since the fault I committed yesterday was so

# ALLIANCE OF ROHAN AND ANGOULEME AND BRITTANY.

*(To face the Story of Rolandine, Novel XXI.)*



great, and you say it is a grievous one, and since I know no tale fit to atone for it, I must give my vote to Parlamente, who with her good sense knows so well how to praise the ladies that she will cover my true story with the cloak of forgetfulness." "I do not undertake," answered Parlamente, "to make atonement for your sins, but only not to follow in your steps. Wherefore, with the truth to which we are sworn and agreed, it is my purpose to show you that there are women who in their love passages always keep honour before their eyes. And since she, of whom I am about to tell you, came of a good house, I will only change the names: and pray you, ladies, believe that love has no power to make alteration in a chaste and honourable heart, the which you shall see by the following relation."

## NOVEL XXI.

*The steadfast and honourable love of Rolandine, who after many sorrows at last finds happiness.*

There was a Queen of France who in her household maintained many maidens of good and illustrious families. Amongst others there was one named Rolandine,[1] who was the Queen's near kinswoman, but for

[1] There can be no doubt that M. Franck, in a happy hour, discovered Anne de Rohan under the disguise of Rolandine. "I will change the names," said Parlamente, and of Rohan, she made Rolandine. Anne de Rohan was cousin and maid of honour to Queen Anne of Brittany the wife first of Charles VIII. and then of Louis XII. of France. The description of the Queen as maintaining many illustrious maidens is quite exact. She was the first Queen who filled the Court with maids of honour and ladies in waiting. A chaste, pious, and honourable woman, she was none the less irascible, obstinate, and difficult in temper—a typical Bretonne. She was a good friend, but also a hard and bitter enemy. It is

some discontent she had conceived with her father, she gave her not over-pleasant entertainment. This girl, not being of the prettiest or the ugliest, was yet so discreet and virtuous that several great personages had asked her in marriage, but met with a cold answer, for her father loved money so well that he made nothing of the advancement of his daughter, and the Queen her mistress, as I have said, held her in such small favour that they who were fain to gain her good grace asked not Rolandine of her. So by her father's neglect and the Queen's misliking, the poor girl stayed a long while without being married. And being sad at heart on this account, not so much that she desired to be married as for shame that she was not, she gave herself up wholly to God, leaving behind her all the pomps and vanities of the Court, and her sole delight was in prayer and in the doing of needlework. So in this quiet manner of living her young years were passed, and they were as well and virtuously spent as one could desire. Now there was at Court a young gentleman[1] who carried on

quite true that among her enemies she reckoned Jean II., Vicomte de Rohan, the father of Rolandine, who, in 1470, deserted the Duke of Brittany, the Queen's father, for the camp of Louis XI. He fought under Louis de la Trémouille at St Aubin, where his position, as a Breton in the hosts of France, was scarcely patriotic. Moreover, it was rumoured that Louis XI. had offered him the crown of Brittany. Queen Anne, less magnanimous than her husband, never forgot the injuries done to the Duchess of Brittany.

[1] M. le Roux de Lincy suggests very plausibly, as it appears to me, that this gentleman, with the bar sinister on an exceeding noble coat, was the Bastard of Angoulême, John, the natural son of John, Count of Angoulême. Lacroix objects that John of Angoulême would be too old; but this is according to Le Roux's supposition that the action of this story should be placed after 1500. More likely it happened in 1499, when (not in 1508) Louise of Savoy first brought her children to the Court of Louis XII. We read a few pages further on, "there came to Court with the

an exceeding noble coat the bar sinister, though as pleasant a comrade and as honest a man as any, but mighty poor, and for comeliness he had so little that none but she would have chosen him for a lover. For a long while he had lived without a mate, but since one unfortunate seeks out another, he addressed himself to Rolandine, seeing that their fortunes, complexions, and estates were all alike. And while they made complaint to one another of their mischances, they became great friends; and finding themselves to be partakers in the same lot, they sought one another out everywhere, and in this manner was engendered a great and lasting acquaintanceship between them. But those who had beheld Rolandine afore so retired that she spoke to no one, now seeing her incessantly with this gentleman, were mightily scandalised thereat, and told her gouvernante that she should not endure their long talks together. She therefore made remonstrance to Rolandine, telling her that all men took in bad part that she spoke so much to one who was not rich enough for a husband, nor handsome enough for a sweetheart. Rolandine, who had always suffered reproof for her austerity and not her worldliness, said to her gouvernante: "Alas, mother, you see that I cannot have a husband of like estate with myself, and as for those who are young and comely, I have always fled them, lest perchance I fall into the same pit into which others have fallen. And since I find, as you know, this gentleman to be a prudent man and a

young prince her son, a lady nearly related to the lover of Rolandine." John of Angoulême was the brother-in-law of Louisa, the uncle of Francis and Margaret, according to the ties of blood. Legitimated as an infant in 1458, he was in 1499 about forty years old, and Rolandine, we must remember, was not in her first youth.

virtuous, and that his discourse is only on good and honourable things, what wrong have I done in consoling myself in my weariness for those who have spoken to you?" The poor old woman, who loved her mistress more than herself, said to her: "Mistress, I am well persuaded that you speak the truth, and that the treatment you have had of your father and the Queen is not according to your deserts. Yet, since men handle your honour in this fashion, were he your own brother, you would do well to separate yourself from him." Rolandine, weeping, replied to her: "Mother, I will do according to your counsel, but it is a strange thing not to have any matter of consolation in the world." The gentleman, as was his custom, came to talk with her, but she declared to him all that her gouvernante had said, and with tears implored him that he would be content not to hold parley with her until this rumour was overpast; and this at her request he did.

But during this estrangement, having both lost their consolaton, they began to feel a torment that was new to both of them. She ceased not to pray to God, to go on pilgrimages, and to observe duly the fasts and days of abstinence; for love, till now unknown to her, made her so unquiet that she had not rest for a single hour. The gentleman was in no less pitiful case; but he, who had already determined in his heart to love her and endeavour to get her for his wife, thinking both of love and the honour he would have if he succeeded,[1] con-

[1] It would be a great match for the bastard of Angoulême to marry a daughter of the Vicomte de Rohan; his father, the son of Louis of Orleans and Valentine Visconti, had been fitly mated with an aunt of Rolandine's. To marry so great a lady would cover the stain of illegitimacy. Moreover, Rolandine would bring not merely honour to her husband; her father had been well rewarded by Louis XI. for his defection from the ranks of Brittany. He was a rich man and a miser.

ceived that he must seek means of speaking with her, and, above all, of winning over the gouvernante. This he did, making remonstrance to her of the misery of her poor mistress, from whom they were fain to take away all manner of consolation. At this the old woman wept, and thanked him for the honourable friendship he had for her mistress. And they took counsel together how he might best speak with her, and the plan was for Rolandine to often feign to be sick of the megrims, in which noise is hurtful, and when her fellows went into the Queen's chamber, they two could stay by themselves, and then he could talk with her. With this the gentleman was quite content, and altogether ruled himself by the advice of the gouvernante in such sort that when he would he talked with his sweetheart. But this lasted not for a long while ; for the Queen, bearing no great love for her, asked what Rolandine did in her room. And though one said it was by reason of her sickness, another would have it she stayed in her room because parley with the gentleman aforesaid made the megrims to pass over. The Queen, who esteemed the venial sins of others mortal in her, sought her out, and strictly charged her that she should not speak with this gentleman, unless it were in the presence or in the great hall. The girl made no sign, but answered : " If I thought he was displeasing to you, I would never have spoken with him." Natheless she resolved within herself to search out some other means of which the Queen should know nothing, and this she accomplished. For on Wednesdays, Fridays, and Saturdays she fasted and stayed in her room with her gouvernante, and there had time, while her fellows supped, for holding parley with him whom she began

to love exceedingly. And the more they were constrained to cut short their speech, the more affection was there in it; for they took time by stealth as does a robber something of great price. But the matter was not kept so secretly that a servant did not see him go into her room on a fast day, who told his tale in a quarter where it was not concealed from the Queen. And she was so wroth thereat, that no more durst the gentleman enter into the maid's room; but so as not altogether to lose this blessing of speech, he often made pretence of going on a journey, returning at eventide to the castle church in the gear of a Grey Friar or a Jacobin, and so well disguised that none recognised him; and thither went Rolandine and her gouvernante. And he, perceiving the great love she bore him, feared not to say: "You see the risk in which, for your sake, I put my life, and that the Queen has forbidden us to speak together. And also consider of what sort is your father, who thinks not in any manner of marrying you. He has already refused many a good match, in such fashion that I know not any from far or near who can have you. I know well that I am poor, and that you cannot marry a gentleman of my estate; but if love and goodwill were accounted as great treasure, I should think myself the richest man in the world. God has given you riches, and you are in the likelihood of having still more, and if I were so happy as to be chosen by you, I would be your faithful husband, lover, and follower unto my life's end. But if you chose one of equal estate, a thing difficult for you, he would be to you as a master, and would regard your goods more than yourself, and the beauty of others more than your virtuousness; and, while he enjoyed the

usufruct of your wealth, he would not treat you as you deserve. The desire I have of this contentment, and my fear lest another possess himself of it, cause me to implore you that on the same day you make me happy and yourself the best satisfied and best entreated wife that ever was." Rolandine hearing the discourse that she herself had determined to hold with him, replied with a well-pleased face: "I am glad that you have made this beginning, for I have for a long time been resolved to speak with you to this intent, and have thought upon the matter for the two years in which I have known you, never ceasing to place before me all manner of conclusions both for and against. But since I confess that I wish to enter into this estate of matrimony, it is now full time that I begin and choose someone with whom I may live with a contented mind. I have not found one, be he rich, comely, or of noble blood with whom my heart and mind could be in such accord as with you; for I know that in marrying you I shall do God no displeasure, but rather follow His commands. As for my father he has done so little for my good and so much to my hurt, that the law will have me marry and by no means lose mine inheritance. As for the Queen my mistress, I shall not make it a point of conscience to do her a pleasure and God a displeasure; since she has done nothing but hinder me from having any blessing I might have had in my youth. But to the intent that you may understand that my love is built upon virtue and honour, you shall promise me that, if I take you in marriage, you will not endeavour to seek the consummation of it till either my father is dead or I bring him to consent." This the gentleman promised willingly, and they exchanged rings and

kissed one another in the church before God, whom they had as witness to their promise; and between them there passed no other familiarity, save kissing.

This small contentment filled with joy the hearts of these two perfect lovers, and they were for some time without seeing one another, but yet in full security of love. Now there was no place in which glory might be gained to which the gentleman was not fain to go, since he could not account himself for a poor man, God having given to him so rich a wife; and while he was away she kept their perfect love so in her heart, that all others were as nothing to her. And although there were they who asked her in marriage, they had no answer from her but that, since she had lived such a long while unmarried, she had no wish ever to be married. This answer came to the ears of so many folk that the Queen heard thereof, and asked her wherefore she gave it. And Rolandine said that it was given from obedience to her, who had never desired her to be married to any man who could have made honourable provision for her; and that age and patience had made her resolve to content herself with her present estate. And to all who spoke to her on this manner she gave the same reply. But when the wars were over and the gentleman was returned to Court, she by no means spoke to him before other folk, but would go always to a certain church where, under pretext of confession, she would parley with him; for the Queen had charged both him and her that they should not speak to one another on pain of their lives, except it were in some great assembly. But honourable love knowing nothing of such charges, was more ready to find means of speech than was the enemy to spy it

out; and he, concealing himself under the habit of every order of monks he could think of, they continued in this pleasant fashion till that the King went to his pleasure house near Tours. In that place there was no church to which the ladies could go on foot save only the one pertaining to the castle, and that so badly designed for their purpose that there was no hiding-place or confessional in it in which the confessor could not be clearly recognised. Natheless, if opportunity failed them on one side, love found them other and easier, for there came to Court a lady nearly related to the lover of Rolandine. And she with the young prince her son were lodged in the King's household, and the prince's room stood out beyond the rest of the house, in such a manner that, from his window, it was possible to see and talk with Rolandine, for the windows were at the angle where the two parts of the house joined one another. And in this room of hers, that stood above the King's Hall, there were lodged with her all the ladies who were her fellows. And she, ofttimes seeing the prince at his window, by her gouvernante advised her husband of it; whereupon, after well observing the place, he feigned to take great delight in the reading of a book concerning the Knights of the Round Table,[1] which was in the

[1] Romances of chivalry had a great vogue throughout the reign of Charles VIII. The young king had been left uneducated by his father, who feared a little to imperil by the strain of learning the slender constitution of his only heir, but feared still more to make his son his rival, and therefore deliberately kept him in the dark. During the lifetime of Louis XI., Charles and his mother were little better than prisoners at Amboise. Here Queen Charlotte, shut out from the world, passed her dreary days in the reading of romances, and this taste of hers was shared and inherited by her imaginative and ignorant young son.

prince's room. And when all were gone to dinner he prayed a body-servant to let him come and read, and to shut him up in the room, and keep good watch over the door. The man, knowing him for a kinsman of his master,[1] and one to be trusted, let him read as much as he would. On the other hand Rolandine would come to her window, and that she might the longer stay there, feigned to have a diseased leg, and dined and supped so early that she went no more to dinner with the other ladies. She likewise set herself to make a quilt of crimson silk,[2] which she fixed at the window, whereat she was fain to be alone, and when she saw there was no one at hand she held parley with her husband, who answered her in such a voice that could not be heard by others. And when she saw any folk she would cough and make some sign to him, so that he might get him gone in good time. They that played the spy on them were persuaded that all love passages were over, for she never stirred from a room whither of a certainty he could not come, since he was altogether forbidden to enter it. But one day the prince's mother, being in her son's room, placed herself at the window where was the great book of Romances, and she had not been there a long while before one of Rolandine's companions saw her and spoke to her. The lady asked her how fared Rolandine, and the girl replied that she could see for herself if it were her pleasure, and made Rolandine come to the window in her nightcap. So, after speaking about her sickness, each went back to her own place. The lady, looking at the great book of the Round Table, said to the servant who had charge of it:

[1] He was, as I have said, the uncle of the little Francis.

[2] Un lict de réseul: reticella, a sort of open-worked embroidery.

"I marvel how young folk can waste their time in the reading of such folly!" The man answered that he marvelled still more that men of age and of repute [1] for wisdom were exceedingly delighted with it; and as a matter for astonishment, told her how the gentleman, her kinsman, stayed at the window four or five hours every day to read in this fine book aforesaid. Straightway the reason of it came into the lady's mind, and she charged the servant to hide himself close at hand and take account of what happened. This he did, and found this gentleman's book to be the window whither Rolandine came and spoke to him, and heard many a love-passage they thought to have kept altogether secret. On the morrow he bore this to his mistress, who sent for the gentleman, and after chiding him, forbade him any more to be in that place; and in the evening she spoke to Rolandine, threatening her that, if she continued in this foolish love, she would tell the Queen of all her doings. Rolandine, no whit afraid, swore that after her mistress's forbidding her she had never spoken to him, let them say what they would, and she called her fellows and servants to witness that such was the truth. And for the matter of the window, she denied to have spoken there to the gentleman; but he, fearing the thing was made known, withdrew himself from the danger, and was a long time without returning to Court, but not without writing to Rolandine in such subtle fashion that, howsoever much the Queen might play the spy, there was not a week in which she did not twice get news of him.

And when a monkish messenger, who was the first he

[1] This phrase seems to bear out the likelihood of Rolandine's lover being no green youth, but a man of forty, such as John of Angoulême.

had used, failed him, he sent her a little page, now dressed in one colour and now in another. And he would stop at the doors, through which all the ladies were wont to pass, and give her the letters privily in the press. But one day, the Queen going into the country, a certain one whose charge it was to look after this affair, recognised the page and ran after him; but he, who was of keen wit, suspecting that he would be searched, entered the house of a poor woman who had her pot on the fire, and forthwith burnt up the letters. The gentleman followed him up and stripped him quite naked, and thoroughly searched his vesture, but found nothing, and so let him go. Whereupon the old woman asked the gentleman why he had searched the boy. He said to her: "To find certain letters which I thought he had carried." "By no means could you have found them," said the woman, "so well were they hidden." "I pray you," said he, "tell me in what slit they are hidden," having a good hope of getting them back. But when he understood that the fire was the hiding place, he knew the page to have been the keener of the two, and made report of the whole matter to the Queen. And from henceforth Rolandine's husband could no more avail himself of the page; so he sent an old servant, who, forgetting the death that he knew well the Queen threatened against those who intermeddled with this matter,[1] undertook to carry letters to Rolan-

[1] Queen Anne, a Bretonne, the proudest, the most rigid of her race, may have been inspired not only by her enmity to Rolandine, but by her horror of the thought that one, who was her own cousin, should bring the bar sinister into her quarterings. Anne was a proud, a shrewd, a bitter nature. Her husband, who loved her, had often to excuse it: "One must endure a great deal," he would say, "on the part of a good woman."

dine. And when he was entered in unto the castle where she was, he set himself to watch by a door at the foot of the grand staircase whither all the ladies passed; but a servant who before had seen him straightway knew him, and told the Queen's master of the household, who presently came to seek him and clap him up. But the messenger, prudent and wary, seeing they looked at him from far off, turned himself to the wall, and tearing up the letter into as small pieces as he could, threw them behind a door. Forthwith he was taken and searched in every way; but when they could find nothing they asked him on his oath if he had not brought letters, using with him all manner of threats and persuasions to make him to confess the truth; but promising or threatening, it was all one, and they none the wiser. Report of this came to the Queen, and certain of the company were of the opinion that it would be well to look behind the door near which he was taken; and this being done they found that they sought—namely, the pieces of the letter. Then was summoned the King's confessor, who, after putting the pieces in order on a table, read the letter at length; and so was brought to light the truth concerning the concealed marriage, for the gentleman called Rolandine nothing but *wife*. The Queen, who had no mind to cover her neighbour's misdeeds, as she ought to have done, made a great noise of it, and commanded that every way should be tried to make the poor man confess the truth of the letter; and when it was shown to him he could not deny it, but whatever they said or showed to him he would say no more. Those who had charge of him then led him to the bank of the river and put him in a sack, saying that he had lied to God and the Queen against the proven truth.

He, who had rather lose his life than make accusation against his master, asked of them a confessor, and after easing his conscience as well as might be, he said to them: "Good sirs, I pray you tell my lord that I commend to him the life of my wife and children, for with hearty goodwill I give my life for his service. Now do your pleasure on me, for no word will I utter against my master. Thereupon, all the more to affright him, they threw him bound up in the sack into the river, calling to him: "Tell the truth and your life shall be spared." But perceiving that he answered them not a word, they drew him from the water and brought the report of it to the Queen, who said that neither the King her husband nor herself had such good fortune in their servants as a man who had not wherewithal to pay them. And she would fain have drawn him into her service, but he would by no means of his own will leave his master. Natheless, by the leave of the said master, he took service under the Queen, where he lived in happiness and good contentment.

And the Queen being acquainted with the truth of the marriage by the gentleman's letter, made summon Rolandine, and with a wrathful countenance calling her *wretch* in place of *cousin*, laid before her the shame she had done her father's house, her kinsfolk, and her mistress, in marrying without her leave or commandment. Rolandine, who for a long while had known the small love the Queen bore her, gave her as little in return. And since love was wanting between them neither had fear any place, and Rolandine thought likewise that this rebuke before several persons did not proceed so much from love as from a desire to do her an open shame, the Queen taking more pleasure in chiding her

than grief at seeing her in fault. So with a face as glad and assured as the Queen's was wrathful and troubled, she replied: "Mistress, did you not plainly know your own heart and the manner of it, I would set before you the ill-will you have for a long time borne against my father and myself, but this you know so well that it will not appear marvellous to you that all the world has a suspicion of it; and as for me, I have felt this intent of yours to my great hurt. For, if it had been your pleasure to favour me as you do those who are not so near akin as I, I should now have been married both to your honour and mine, but you have left me as one altogether deprived of your grace, so that all the good matches I might have made are passed away before my eyes, by reason of my father's neglect and the small account you make of me. At this I fell into such despair, that if my health allowed of it, I had entered into the religious life, and so escaped from the continual sorrows your severity laid upon me. In this sad case one sought me out, who would have been of as noble blood as myself, if the love of two persons were to be as much esteemed as the wedding-ring, for you know that his father was before mine in precedency.[1] And he for a long while has courted me and loved me; but you, mistress, who never pardon me any petty fault, nor praise me for any good deed; although you well knew that it was not my custom to listen to worldly love passages, and that I was altogether given up to devotion; have found it a strange thing that I should speak with a gentleman as unfortunate as myself, from

[1] Of course the Count of Angoulême, as a prince of the blood, took precedence in France not only of the Viscounts of Rohan but of the Duke of Brittany himself.

whom I neither wished nor sought anything except some matter of consolation. And when I saw this consolation taken away from me, I was resolved to take as much pains to gain it as you took to deprive me of it; whereupon we promised each other marriage, and confirmed the promise with a ring. Methinks, therefore, you do me great wrong to call me *wicked*, since in this great and perfect love, in which I found the consolation I longed for, there passed between us nothing worse than kissing, all else being deferred by me till, by the grace of God, my father's heart should be inclined to consent thereto. Sure am I that I have in no way offended God nor my conscience, for I waited till the age of thirty years to see what you and my father would do for me, having kept my youth so chastely and virtuously that no living man can cast anything in my teeth. And using the reason given to me by God, seeing myself growing old, and despairing of finding a match according to my estate, I resolved to marry one according to my wish; not for the satisfaction of the lust of the flesh, since there has been no carnal consummation; nor for the lust of the eyes, since you know he is not comely; nor for the pride of life, he being poor and of small reputation. But I have taken account alone of the virtue that is in him, the which all men are constrained to laud and magnify; also of the great love he bears me, by reason of which I hope to find with him a life of quiet and good treatment. And after weighing duly both the good and the evil that may come of it, I have fixed on him who seems to me the best, and with whom I have determined for the last two years to pass the remainder of my days. And so steadfast is this my resolve, that

not all the torments I may endure—no, not death itself—can turn me from it. Wherefore I pray you to excuse that which in truth is very excusable, and leave me to live in that peace which I hope to find with him."

The Queen, seeing her face to be so steadfast and her words so true, could not answer in reason, but, continuing in wrath to reproach her, at last fell to weeping, and said: "Wretch that you are, in place of humbling yourself before me, and repenting of your great fault, you speak dry-eyed and audaciously, and so make manifest the obstinacy and hardness of your heart. But if the King and your father will listen to me, they will put you in a place where you will be constrained to talk after another fashion." "Mistress," answered Rolandine, "since you accuse me of speaking audaciously, I will be silent, if it is not your pleasure that I should reply to you." And being commanded to speak, she said to the Queen: "It is not my part to speak audaciously and without due reverence to you who are my mistress and the greatest princess in Christendom; and this it was by no means my intent to do, but since I can call no advocate to speak for me, save the truth that is known only by me, I am constrained to tell it plainly and without fear, hoping that when you know it you will not esteem me what it has been your pleasure to name me. I am not afraid of any living creature hearing how I have kept myself in this matter, since I know that I have thereby offended neither God nor my honour. And since I am persuaded that He who sees my heart is on my side, wherefore should I fear? And having this Judge for me, shall I of His subjects be afraid? And for what cause should

I weep, since neither my conscience nor my heart do at all reprove me?—nay, so far am I from repentance, that if I could make a new beginning I would do even as I have done. But you, indeed, have good cause for weeping, as much for the wrongs you did me in my youth as for that you now reproach me before all for a thing which is rather to be imputed to you than me. If I had justly offended God, the King, you, my kinsfolk, and my conscience, I should be hard of heart if I did not repent with weeping. But for so befitting and holy an agreement, in which no fault can be found save that you have too soon blazed it abroad, showing thereby that you have a greater desire for my dishonour than for preserving the good repute of your house and kinsfolk, I by no means ought to weep; yet, mistress, since such is your pleasure, I will not gainsay you; for whatever pains you lay upon me, I being innocent, will take no less pleasure in the enduring of them than you in the inflicting. Wherefore give what commands you please to my father, and I am well assured that he will not fail you, and as far as my ill is affected he will be altogether your creature; and as obedient to your will he has hitherto neglected my good, so he will be quick to obey you for my evil. But I have a Father in heaven, who, I am assured, will give me patience to bear all your torments, and in Him alone do I put my trust."

At this the Queen was still more wrathful, and commanded that she should be taken out of her sight and put in a room by herself, where she might have speech with no one. But she did not deprive her of her gouvernante, by whose means she let her husband know her case, and that which she thought it was best for him to do. And he, thinking the deeds he had done

in the King's service[1] might avail him something, came post haste to Court and found the King a-hunting, and told him the truth of the matter, entreating him to do so much for a poor gentleman as to appease the Queen in such sort that the marriage might be consummated. The King replied nothing save: "Do you assure me that you have taken her to wife?" "Ay, sire," said the gentleman, "by word and gift alone; and if it please you, we'll make an ending to it." The King, lowering his head, and without saying a word more, returned forthwith to his castle, and when he was come thither, gave charge to the captain of the guards that he should take the gentleman prisoner. Natheless, one of his acquaintance, who knew the King's intent by his visage, counselled him to get him gone and stay in a house hard-by; and if the King made search for him, as he suspected he would, he would presently let him know so that he might fly the realm; but if things were softened down he would send word for him to come back. And the gentleman, trusting in his friend, made such good speed that the captain of the guards could not at all find him.

The King and Queen took counsel together what they should do with this poor lady, who had the honour of being akin to them, and by the advice of the Queen it was determined that she should be sent back to her father, who was informed of the whole truth. But before she was sent they made several weighty doctors of the Church and Council hold parley with her, to the intent that since her marriage was a matter only of words, it could easily be dissolved by the agreement of

[1] John of Angoulême was cousin-german, by the left hand, of King Louis, and, of course, had suffered the chequered fortunes of the House of Orleans.

both parties, this being the King's will on the matter, to preserve the honour of his house. Her reply was that in all things she was ready to obey the King save in cases of conscience, but those whom God hath joined together it is lawful for no man to put asunder. So she prayed them to tempt her no more, saying that if love and goodwill, founded on the fear of God, are the true and sure bonds of marriage, she was so fast in bonds that neither fire, sword, nor water could burst them, but death alone, to whom and to no other she would give up her ring and her oath, and so entreated them to speak no more on't; for she stood so firm in her resolve that she had rather die and keep faith than live and break it. So these doctors aforesaid carried back to the King her answer; and when the King and Queen saw that there was no way to make her renounce her husband, they sent her back to her father in such mean and pitiful sort that they who beheld her pass by wept to see it. And though she was in fault, so grievous was the punishment and so great her steadfastness, that this fault of hers was commonly accounted as a virtue. And her father, being advised of this her coming, would by no means see her, but made bear her to a castle in a forest, the which he had aforetime built for a reason well worthy to be told. And there he kept her for a long while, saying that if she would renounce her husband he would hold her for his daughter and set her free. All the same she remained firm, and preferred to remain in the bonds both of prison and marriage than to have all the freedom in the world without her husband. And by the manner of her countenance one would have judged her pains to have been most pleasant pastimes, for she bore them for the sake of him whom she loved.

And as to men, what shall I say concerning them? Her husband, so deeply under obligation to her, fled to a country where he had many friends, I would say Germany. And there he showed well by the lightness of his disposition that not so much had he paid court to Rolandine by reason of a true and perfect love, as by reason of his covetousness and ambition. For he became amorous of a German lady, and forgot his letters to her who for his sake had borne so great tribulation. And whereas no ill-fortune, however rigorous, had hindered them from writing to one another, till this foolish and wicked love of his, so grievous was it to Rolandine that she knew no rest. And seeing his letters that they were cold and altogether changed from what they had been, she suspected that some new love separated her husband from her, and had done that which all the torments and pains of her could not effect. But since perfect love buildeth not judgment upon suspicion, she found means to secretly send a servant in whom she trusted, not to write or speak with her husband, but to spy out his ways and discover the truth. And this servant, having returned from his journey, told her that of a surety he had found him paying court to a German lady, and that the common report was that he would endeavour to marry her, since she was very rich. These tidings gave such sorrow to the heart of Rolandine that she fell grievously sick, and they who knew the reason of it told her, on behalf of her father, that after this great wrong done her she would do right to renounce him, and strove to bring her to this opinion. But notwithstanding that she was in very great torment, yet in no way would she change her purpose, and showed in this last temptation the great-

ness of her love and virtue. For as love grew less on his side, so it grew more on hers, and when she knew that in her heart alone now dwelt the love that formerly was between the two, she was resolved to preserve it until the death of the one or the other. Wherefore the Divine Goodness, which is perfect charity and true love, had pity on her grief and her long-suffering, so that after a few days her husband died while courting another woman. And being well informed of this by those who had seen him laid in the ground, she sent to her father entreating him that he would come and speak to her. The father, who had never spoken to her since she was first put in bonds, went forthwith, and after having heard her just conclusions, in place of reproving her, or as he had often threatened, of killing her, he took her in his arms, and weeping, said: "My daughter, you are more in the right than I; for, if there have been any fault in this matter, it is I that am the chief cause thereof; but since God has so ordered it, I wish to make satisfaction for what has passed." And after that he had brought her to his house, he treated her as his eldest daughter,[1] and she was asked in marriage by a prudent and virtuous gentleman who bore the arms and name of their house. And he held Rolandine, with whom he often talked, in such esteem that he gave her praise where others had but blame for her, since he knew her end and aim to have been virtue. Which marriage, being to the mind of the father, was before long con-

[1] Anne de Rohan was the third child and elder daughter of her father. She married in 1517 her kinsman, Pierre de Rohan, the third son of the great Maréchal de Gié, so familiar to all who have invaded Italy with Charles VIII. Anne de Rohan lived happily with him, and bore him, as the novel sets forth, two sons. Anne de Rohan was the mother of René de Rohan, who is, in my opinion, the Saffredent of the "Heptameron."

cluded. It is true that a brother of hers, the sole heir of their house, would give her no portion, saying that she had disobeyed her father, and after his death entreated her in such sort that her husband, who was a younger son, and herself, had much ado to live. But God provided for them, since the brother who wished to keep all, by his sudden death, in a single day lost all, both of his and hers. So was she made heiress to a good and rich estate, in which, with her husband's love, she lived piously and honourably. And after having brought up two sons which God gave to them, she joyously rendered her soul to Him in whom she had always placed her trust.

"Now, ladies, let the men who say we are inconstant ever, show me an example of a husband like this wife, and of as good faith and steadfastness. So sure am I that it will be a hard matter for them, that I prefer to hold them quit of it, than put them to the pain of this endeavour. But as to you, ladies, I exhort you, for the better retention of your renown, either not to love at all, or with as perfect a love as was that of Rolandine. And beware lest any say she did wrong to her honour, for by her steadfastness, she worked to the increasing of ours." "Faith, Parlamente," said Oisille, "you have told us the story of a woman with a great and honourable heart; but that which adds to her glory is the disloyalty of her husband, who could leave her for another." "I think," said Longarine, "that this was the hardest to be borne of all her sorrows, for there is no grief so great but the united love of two cannot easily bear: but when the one fails in his duty, and leaves all the burden upon the other, then indeed it becomes unbearable." "You ought then to have compassion on us," said Geburon,

"who carry the whole weight of love, which you will not so much as touch with the tips of your fingers." "Ah, Geburon," said Parlamente, "often the burdens of men and women are different. For the love of a woman, well-founded upon God and her honour, is so good and reasonable a thing that he who falls therefrom is worthy to be accounted poltroon and villain before God and man. But the love of men for the most part is merely a matter of pleasure, into which women, ignorant of their evil intent, cast themselves all too soon; and when God shows them how vile are the hearts of those they esteem good, they are well advised to get them gone, with their honour and reputation, for 'soonest ended best mended.'" "This conclusion of yours is built upon mere fantasy," said Hircan; "if you would maintain by it that honourable women can with honour leave the love of men, and not men that of women, as if the hearts of them in anywise differed, as do their faces and gear." To this Parlamente, somewhat angry, replied: "I know well that with you the best women are those whose wickedness is best known." "Let us leave this talk," said Simontault, "for whether we take the heart of man or the heart of woman, the better of the two is nothing worth. But to whom will Parlamente give her vote, that we may hear some brave relation?"

* * * * *

"I give it," said she, "to Dagoucin, whom I behold in such contemplation as must be the preparing for some good story." "Since I dare not say what I would," answered Dagoucin, "at least I will speak of one to whom cruelty at the first brought hurt, though afterwards it profited him. For though Love doth esteem himself so puissant a warrior that he would fain

go stark naked, and can scarce bear to lie concealed, yet ladies, they that obey his counsels and declare themselves too soon, are often brought into an evil case. And the thing so fell out with a Castilian gentleman, whose story you shall hear."

## NOVEL XXIV.

*The cruelty of a Queen of Castille to one of her lovers, and the profit he took thereby.*

In the household of the King and Queen of Castille —the names of them I know not, for they were not told me—there was a gentleman so excellently endued with all comeliness of mind, body, and estate, that there was none equal to him in all the coasts of Spain. All men admired his virtues, but still more the strangeness of him, for none could show any lady he loved or ever had loved. And though there was many a dame at Court fit to have set ice on fire, not one was there who could take hold on this gentleman, whose name was Elisor.

The Queen, who was a woman of much virtuousness, but not altogether free from that flame which burns the more the less it is perceived, seeing this gentleman that he loved none of her ladies, marvelled thereat, and one day asked him if it were possible that he loved as little as he seemed to do it. He replied that if she could behold his heart as plainly as his face, she would not ask him that question. She, anxious to discover his intent, pressed him so hard that he acknowledged to loving a lady whom he thought the best in Christendom. All her endeavour, both by prayers and commandments, did she use that she might know who the

lady was, but 'twas of no avail; whereupon she made pretence of anger, and swore she would no more speak to him if he did not name her he loved. At this he was so troubled that he said he would rather die than be obliged to name her; but seeing that he would lose the Queen's favour by not telling her a thing so honourable that it ought not to be taken in bad part by any one, he said to her in great fear: "Madame, I have not boldness sufficient for the telling of it, but the first time you go a-hunting I will show you the lady, and sure am I that you will esteem her to be the prettiest and the loveliest lady in all the world." For the sake of this the Queen took good care to go earlier a-hunting than she would have done, and Elisor being advertised of this made himself ready, as was his wont, for the attending of her. And this was the manner of his preparation: he made him a great mirror of steel after the fashion of a cuirasse, and having put it on him, covered it well with a cloak of black frieze all welted with purflew and gold galloon. His mount was a jet-black horse, caparisoned with a perfect harness, and whatsoever of this was metal was worked with gold and black enamel after the fashion of the Moors. His hat was of black silk, and on it was fixed a cockade which had been devised of a love held back by force, and all made rich with precious stones. Sword and dagger were not less fine nor worse devised; to be short, he showed most bravely, and rode his horse to admiration, so that all who saw him left the chase to watch the paces and the leaps which Elisor made it accomplish. After bringing the Queen to the place where the toils were set in the fine fashion I have told you, he got down from his horse and went to help the Queen dismount her palfrey. And

as she stretched out her arms to him he threw open his cloak, and taking her between his arms he showed her his mirror cuirasse, saying: "I beseech you look here." And without waiting any reply he set her gently on the ground. The chase being ended, the Queen returned to her castle without speaking with Elisor; but after supper she called him to her, saying he was the greatest liar she had ever seen, for he had promised to show her at the hunt the lady whom he loved most, and had not done it, wherefore she was determined to take no more account of him. Elisor, fearing she had not heard what he had said, replied that he had by no means failed to fulfil her commandment, for he had shown her both the woman and the thing he loved more than all the world. She, feigning not to understand him, answered that she did not know him to have shown her a single one of her ladies. "It is true," said Elisor, "but whom did I show you while I helped you off your horse?" "Nothing," replied the Queen, "but a mirror on your breast." "And what did you see in that mirror?" "Nothing but myself," answered the Queen. "Then," said Elisor, "have I kept the promise I made to you, for there is no other image within my breast than that you saw outside it, and that image alone I am fain to love, worship, and adore, not as a woman, but as my God on earth, into the hands of whom I commit my life and my death. And my prayer to you is that this my great and perfect love, that was my life concealed, may not be my death revealed. And though I be not worthy that you should look upon me or accept me as your lover, at least suffer me to live, as I have been accustomed, in the contentment which I have for that my heart has dared to bottom its love on so perfect

and worthy a rock, from which love I can have no other delight except that it is perfect, seeing I must be content to love, though I may never be loved. And if it be not to your liking, since you have discovered my great desire, to use me so familiarly as heretofore, do but continue to me my life, which stands alone upon my seeing of you. For from you I have now nothing but what suffices for my extreme necessity, and if I have less you will have one servant the less, for you will lose the best and most devoted you have ever had or ever will have." The Queen, either to show herself other than she was, or to make long trial of the love he bore her, or because she had another lover whom she would not leave for the sake of him, or to hold him as a reserve to take the other's place when he should commit some fault, said with a countenance nor sad nor glad: "Elisor, since I know not the strength of love, I will say nothing to you of your foolishness in aiming at so high and hard a thing as the love of me; for I know man holds his heart so little at command, that he is not able to love or hate where he pleases; but since you have so well concealed the matter, I wish to know how long you have been in this case." Elisor, looking at the beautiful face of her, and seeing that she made enquiry concerning his sickness, hoped that it might be to her liking to furnish the remedy. But seeing that while she asked him she still looked gravely and prudently, he was afraid, seeming to himself to be before a judge, whose sentence he feared would be against him. But he swore to her that love had taken root in his heart while he was very young, but he had not felt the pain till the last seven years, or rather no pain but a sickness, giving such contentment that to be cured of it would be

death. "Since you have so long and so steadfastly kept the matter secret," said the Queen, "I must be as slow to believe as you to tell. Wherefore, if it is as you say, I am fain to put you to such a proof as cannot be doubted, which accomplished, I will esteem you to be towards me even according to your oath, and in like manner you shall find me such as you desire." Elisor entreated her to make what proof she pleased of him, since there could be nothing so difficult as not easily to be borne, if by it she would believe the love he bore her, and prayed her instantly to command him according to her pleasure. She therefore said to him: "Elisor, if you love me even as you say, I am well assured that to have my favour nothing will be hard for you to endure. Wherefore I charge you by all the desire you have to win me, and all the fear you have to lose me, that to-morrow, without again seeing me, you depart hence and betake yourself to some place where you shall have no tidings of me, nor I of you, till this day seven years. You, since for seven years you have felt this love, are well persuaded of it; and I, when I have had equal experience, shall believe what your word alone cannot make me to believe nor understand." Elisor, hearing this cruel command, on one part doubted whether she was not desirous of estranging herself from him, on the other part hoping that the proof would speak better than words, accepted it, and said to her: "Being that I have lived these seven years without any hope, and keeping this fire concealed; now that it is known of you, I shall spend these other seven in a better hope and patience. But if I obey your command, by which I shall be deprived of all the good I have in the world, what hope do you give that when they are

overpast you will accept me for your faithful and loyal servant?" The Queen, drawing a ring from her finger, said to him: "Behold this ring I give you, let us cut it into halves, I will keep the one and you the other, to the end that, if length of time have power to take away my memory of you, I shall be able to recognise you by this half-ring fitting with mine." Elisor took the ring and broke it into two, giving one-half to the Queen and keeping the other himself. And having taken leave of her, more dead than they who have given up the ghost, he went to his lodging to take order for his departure. This he did in such sort that, putting all in train at his house, he betook him with but one servant to so solitary a place that none of his kinsfolk or his friends heard tidings of him for seven whole years. As to the life he led during this time, or as to the grief he bore for this absence, none knew of it, but they that loved him could not be ignorant of it. And when the seven years were accomplished, as the Queen went to mass there came to her a hermit with a mighty long beard, who, kissing her hand, gave her a supplication, which she did not forthwith read, though it was her custom to take all supplications given into her hand, however poor might be the petitioner. But about the middle of mass she opened the packet, and found in it the half of the ring she had given Elisor, at which she was astonished and not a little glad. And before the reading of it she commanded her almoner that he should straightway bring before her the hermit-like man who had given her the supplication. So the almoner made search for him on all sides, but could have no tidings of him, save that a certain one affirmed that he had seen him mount his horse, but knew not the road he took. And while that

her almoner was gone the Queen read the supplication, the which was indeed a letter written as well as might be. And were it not that I desired you should understand it, I would not have translated it, since, ladies, you must know that the Castilian far better sets forth this passion of love than any other. And this was the manner of it:

"Time by its power and over-ruling might
Hath made me love to understand aright.
Time hath been given me so that by my woe
She who believed not words might surely know
The truth of them. My love, the cause of it
Time hath disclosed; 'twas beauty and not wit.
Below this beauty is much cruelty,
But Time, I once had for mine enemy,
Hath shown your beauty to be profitless,
Your cruelty the way to holiness.
For when you drove me from you, and no more
I saw the face I did so much adore,
I saw what was below; then all my grief
In exile was converted to relief.
And there had stayed without a tear or sigh,
Save that to give my most supreme goodbye
I came to-day. For Time hath shown how bare
And poor a thing is love; and all my care
Is for the years I lost. But then above
Time raised mine eyes unto the perfect love,
And made lay by the other: unto this
Is all my worship; and my service is
Done unto God, not you. You gave me death
For loving you, but it turned to my breath,
My life, my joy.—I fully hold you quit
Of love for me, I have no need of it,
Not yet of you, but only my dear Lord,
Who changeth not and hath a sure reward.
So I take leave of cruelty and pain,
And say my last to hatred and disdain.

Likewise unto that awful flaming fire
That dwells in you, and stirreth up desire,
As well as beauty. So to you, 'Good-bye,'
And be assured that never more shall I
Behold your face, nor shall you look on me
Ever again : this hold for certainty."

This letter was not read without much weeping and lamentation, accompanied by a regret passing all belief. For the losing of a servant, filled with so perfect a love, deserved to be esteemed so great, that no treasure, no, not her very kingdom, could deprive her of her right to be called the poorest and the most wretched woman in the world, since she had lost what all the blessings of the world were not able to recover. And having heard mass to the end and returned to her chamber, she grieved exceedingly even as her cruelty deserved. And no mountain, rock, or forest was there, that she did not search for this hermit ; but He who had borne him from her hands had a care he should not fall into them again, and took him to Paradise, before that she could gain tidings of him in this world.

" Learning by this example the lover can hardly say what is for his good and what for his evil. Still less, ladies, ought you to be thus hard of belief as to demand a proof so difficult that getting your proof you lose your lover." " Of a truth, Dagoucin," said Geburon, " I had all my life esteemed the lady of your tale the most virtuous in the world, but from henceforth I shall hold her the most cruel." " Nevertheless," said Parlemente, " it seems to me that she did him no wrong in wishing for seven years to try if he loved her ; for men are so accustomed to lie in like cases that before one trusts them (if trust them one can) one cannot make

too long a trial of it." "The ladies," said Hircan, "are by far wiser than afore, for they are as well assured of a lover in seven days as the others were in seven years." "Yet in this company," said Longarine, "there are they who have been proved to the extremity for more than seven years, and have not yet gained their desire." "You say truth," said Simontault, "but they should be put among the ladies of old time, for in the new age they would not be received." "Yet," said Oisille, "was not the gentleman well treated by the Queen, since by her means he gave his heart altogether to God?" "In a fortunate hour," said Saffredent, "he found God upon the way, for in the grief he was in I marvel he gave himself not to the devil." Ennasuitte asked him: "And when you are evilly entreated of your lady, is it to such a master that you render yourself?" "Thousands and thousands of times have I given myself to him," answered Saffredent; "but the devil, seeing all the torments of hell cannot make me fare worse than does my lady, disdains to take me, knowing himself to be more easily borne than a woman well-beloved and who loves not in return." "If I were like you," said Parlamente to Saffredent, "with such opinions as yours, I would be the servant of no woman." "So great," he replied, "is my love and my foolishness that where I cannot rule I am content to serve, for the ladies' ill-will cannot overcome the love I have for them." "But, prithee, tell me, on your conscience, do you praise the Queen for this her great severity?" "Ay," said Oisille, "for I believe that she neither wished to love nor be beloved." "If this was her intent," said Simontault, "wherefore did she give him any hope after the seven years were overpast?" "I am of your opinion," said

Longarine, "for let them who wish not to love give no occasion to the continuance of love." "Perchance," said Nomerfide, "she loved some other who was not to be compared with this honest gentleman, and so for a worse left the better." "Oddsfish!" said Simontault, "I think she held him for future use, to take him when she left her present lover. Oddsfish; * * * * 'tis no great honour in a woman to refuse so poor and patient a fellow as this. And since I suspect I know his name, I could ——" He stopped a moment, but Oisille, fearful lest the men should fall to speaking evil of women, declared their pastime had already suffered too long an interruption. So Simontault began: "They that are wont to live at Court or in fine towns deem themselves so knowing that they think all other men are as nothing compared with them; but the truth is that, in all sorts and conditions of men, there are always to be found crafty and deceitful folk. But because of their pride, who esteem themselves so shrewd, the jest is much the better when they are deceived, as I would fain show by this relation of a case that fell out no long while ago."

## NOVEL XXII.

*A notable pasty, and what was found therein.*

It fell out that when King Francis, first of the name, was in the town of Paris, and with him his sister the Queen of Navarre, that she had a secretary named John, who was by no means in the number of those who let a crumb fall to the ground without picking it up. So greedy a fellow was he, that there was nor president, nor counsellor, nor merchant, nor wealthy man that he did not often visit. And about that time there came to the said town of Paris a merchant of Bayonne, named Bernard du Ha, as much for his business as for the advice and help therein of the high sheriff, who was a countryman of his. The Queen of Navarre's secretary often went to see this officer, as one who was a good servant to his master and mistress, and going there on a saint's day he found neither the master nor his wife, but very plainly heard Bernard du Ha, who with some kind of a viol was teaching the servant-maids to dance the Gascon fling. And when the secretary saw him he would have him believe that he was committing a great offence, and that if the mistress of the house and her husband were advised of it they would take it in very bad part. And after setting the fear of this well before his eyes, the Gascon at last prayed him not to speak of it. Whereupon the secretary asked him: "What will you give me if I keep silence?" Bernard du Ha, whose fear was by no means as great as his pretence, for he perceived the other was minded to cozen him, promised to give him a pasty of the best Basque ham he had ever tasted. The secretary, well pleased at

this, asked that he might have the pasty the following Sunday, after dinner,[1] which was promised him. And trusting to this promise he went to see a lady of Paris, whom above all things he desired to have to wife, and said to her: "Fair mistress, if it be your pleasure I will sup with you on Sunday, and have you no care save to provide good bread and good wine, for I have so deceived a blockhead from Bayonne that the remainder of the feast will be at his charges, and by my deceit you shall eat as fine a Basque ham as ever was in Paris." The lady, believing him, called together two or three of the neighbouring gentlewomen whom she loved, and gave them assurance of tasting a dish altogether new to them.

When the Sunday was come, the secretary, looking for his merchant, at last found him on the Pont-au-Change, and graciously accosting him, said: "Begone a twenty devil way for the toil you have given me to find you." Bernard du Ha replied that many a man had taken more pains than he, who at last had not such a dainty dish for his reward. So saying he showed the pasty, which he carried under his cloak, huge enough to feed an army. So joyous thereat was the secretary that, though his mouth was of a monstrous size, he made it so small that one would not have thought he could have chewed the ham with it. So forthwith taking it,

[1] Dinner was about ten o'clock in the morning, and answered to the second breakfast of contemporary France. Supper was served about five in the afternoon; and a light refection of spices, wine, cakes, and different preserves, was taken in the evening before bedtime.

Margaret herself was great in the baking of pasties. We hear of her at Fontainebleau in 1540 making and seasoning with her own hands certain wild-boar pasties to be sent to the King of England. Perhaps she learned the art in Béarn.

without bringing the merchant with him, he carried it to the lady, who was mighty curious to know whether the provender of Gascony equalled that of Paris. And when soup had been brought in and they were eating it, the secretary said to them: "Leave that mawkish fare, and let us taste this lovely whet for wine." So saying he opened the great pasty, and thinking to find the ham, found it so hard that he could not set his knife into it, and after striving to do this several times he was advertised of the cozenage, and discovered his ham to be a wooden shoe, such as they wear in Gascony, with a firebrand for knuckle, and all powdered with iron-rust and sweet-smelling spices. Who then was chapfallen but master secretary, as much for that he was deceived of him he thought to deceive, as that he had deceived her to whom he wished most of all to speak the truth; and, beside all this, a supper of soup was by no means to his liking. The ladies, well-nigh as angry as he, would have accused him of the fact had they not been well assured, by the manner of his countenance, that he was more wroth than they. So after this light refection the secretary went away in a great rage, and seeing that Bernard du Ha had broken his promise, he was determined to cry quits with him, and betook himself to the sheriff's house, resolved to say the worst he could of the aforesaid Bernard. But he came not there so soon as the merchant, who had opened to his countryman the whole matter, and he mocked the secretary, telling him that he had cozened a Gascon to his cost, and this was the only consolation he got from him.

"Such misadventures befall many who, thinking themselves exceedingly crafty, are overmatched in craftiness; wherefore let us do unto others as we would

they should do unto us." "I do assure you," said Geburon, "that I have often known like cases have like issues, and seen men esteemed simple country folk deceive your brave city wit; for there is no greater fool than he that thinks himself wise, nor any wiser than he who knows his nothingness." "Certainly," said Parlamente, "he something knows who knows he nothing knows."[1] "Now," said Simontault, "for fear lest time be wanting to us to complete the tale, I give my vote to Nomerfide, for sure am I that her tricks of rhetoric will keep us no long time." "And I will give you," said she, "that which you hope for of me. It is no matter of wonderment to me, ladies, that love gives a prince means to save himself from peril, for he has been brought up among such a knowing sort of people that I should be mightily astonished if he were found wanting in such cases. But it is in lovers of dull wit that love manifests its power of invention, and to that intent I will relate to you a pretty matter done by a priest with love alone to help him; for of all else he was so ignorant that he could scarce read his missal."

## NOVEL XXIX.

### *A parson's ready wit.*

In the county of Maine there lived at a village named Carrelles a rich farmer, who in his old age had taken to wife a pretty wench, and had of her no children. And she, to console herself, was exceeding friendly

[1] Parlamente, we must remember, like many sixteenth century Princesses, was well-skilled in Greek and Latin, and the phrase of Socrates falls lightly from her lips.

with many gentlemen, and when they failed her she returned to her last resource, I would say the church, and took for companion in her sin him who was able to absolve her of it—that is, her spiritual shepherd, who often came to visit his sheep. Her husband, old and stupid, had no suspicion of her, but since he was a harsh man and a sturdy, his wife played her mystery as privily as might be, fearing lest, if he was advertised of it, he would kill her. And on one day, when he was gone out, his wife, thinking he would not soon return, sent for master parson to come and confess her. And her husband came suddenly; so suddenly that the parson had no time to retreat from the house; but looking whither he might hide himself, he climbed, by the woman's advice, up into the granary, and covered the trap-door with a winnowing fan. Thereupon the husband came into the room, and fearing he might have some suspicion, she made him eat and drink at dinner in such wise that, being afore weary with his toil in the fields, he fell asleep sitting in his chair beside the hearth. The parson, thinking he had spent enough time in the granary, came to the trap-door, and stretching out his neck as much as he was able, perceived the good man to be asleep. But while he was looking at him he leant by mischance so weightily upon the winnowing fan, that both fan and man came down upon the sleeper, who at this awoke. And the parson rising before the other had seen him, said: "Friend, here is your fan, and many thanks for it." Thus saying he fled home. The poor farmer, all astounded, asked his wife: "What is this?" She replied: "'Tis but the fan, sweetheart, the parson has borrowed, and now returns to you." And he, grumbling mightily, said:

"'Tis a very rude fashion of returning what one has borrowed, for I thought the house was about my ears." In this way did the parson save himself at the expense of the good man, who found no fault at all in him save the roughness he had used in returning him his winnowing-fan.

"His master the devil was keeping him, ladies, to the end that he might have him in his hands and torment him for a longer while." "Think not," said Geburon, "that simple folk and men of low estate are less crafty than we; nay, they are the much more cunning. For prithee, consider thieves, murderers, sorcerers, utterers of false coin, and all this sort of people, whose wit is never at rest, they are all poor and apprenticed to some mere mechanical craft." "It is no matter of surprise to me," said Parlamente, "that they excel us in craft, but that love should torment them amid their manifold labours, and that so gentle a passion can hold assize in a churlish heart." "Mistress," said Saffredent, "you know the words of Master Jehan de Mehun:

> "Love doth no less
> Dwell in such folk as have a homespun dress
> Then where are silk and plush for comeliness."

And as to the love in the tale it is not of a sort to make one carry harness; for since the poorer sort of people have not our riches or honours, they have in place the natural things more to their pleasure than we. Their meats are not so dainty, but their appetite is keener, and they live better on coarse bread than we on pheasant. Not so brave and fine their beds as ours, but their sleep is sweeter and their rest more calm. No ladies have they prinked and painted like the goddesses of our idolatry, but they enjoy their pleasures

more often than we without fear of tell-tale tongues, save it be of the beasts and birds that see them. In what we have, they are wanting; and where we have not they have abundance." "Prithee," said Nomerfide, "have done with this peasant and his wife, and let us finish our day before the bells are ringing unto evensong." . . . And so they fell to talking of the frailty of man. "Methinks," said Oisille, "that every man and woman ought to be humble in the fear of God." "Be persuaded," said Parlamente, "that the first step taken by a man trusting in himself is also the first step from God." "But," said Hircan, "do you not see that while we were telling our stories the monks behind the hedge did not hear the bell for evensong, and when we began to talk about God they vanished, and are even now ringing the second bell." "We shall do well in following them," said Oisille, "and in praising God for that we have so joyously passed this day, even to admiration." So saying, they arose and went to the church, where they heard evensong with due devotion. And afterwards they fell to supper, discoursing on the matters that were overpast, and calling to mind many another case, so as to see which were the most worthy of relation. And when the evening had been gaily spent they betook themselves to sweet rest, hoping on the morrow to continue this undertaking, that was so much to their contentment. And so the third day came to an end.

## DAY THE FOURTH.

ON THE FOURTH DAY RELATION IS MADE FOR THE MOST PART OF THE VIRTUOUS PATIENCE AND LONG-SUFFERING OF WOMEN TO WIN THEIR HUSBANDS; AND OF THE PRUDENCE USED OF MEN TOWARDS THEIR WIVES FOR THE PRESERVING OF THE HONOUR OF THEIR HOUSES AND LINEAGE.

### PROLOGUE.

OISILLE, according to her good custom, rose on the morrow a long while before the rest, and meditating on the Holy Scripture, awaited the company, who one by one assembled together. And the slug-a-beds excused themselves so long that Hircan and his wife found the lesson well begun. But Oisille had the wit to search out that place of Scripture reproving them that are negligent to hear the word, and not only read it but made such a goodly and fructifying discourse thereon, that it was impossible to weary at the listening to it. The lesson ended, Parlamente said to her: "I was sorry, when I came, to have been so lazy, but since my fault has been the occasion of your speaking to me to such good purpose, my laziness hath profited me double, for I have both given rest to my body and keenness to my mind, the better to hear your godly conversation." "Then for penance," said Oisille, "let us go to mass and pray Our Lord to give us the will and the means to keep His law; and then let Him command us according to His pleasure." As they said these words they came into the church and

heard mass with due devotion; and afterwards, when they were at table, Hircan did not forget to laugh at his wife and her laziness. When dinner was finished they went to rest and to study their parts, and at the appointed hour they found themselves at the accustomed place. "To whom," said Oisille, "do you give your vote?" "Unto you," said Geburon, "who will not fail to tell us some good story." "Since it has come to my turn," said Oisille, "I will tell you a thing that fell out in my time, and under the eyes of him that told it me. I am assured you know that death puts a close to our misfortunes, but since it does this let us rather call it our happiness and our rest. The chief misfortune then that can befall a man is to desire death and not to have it; wherefore the greatest punishment one can give to an evil-doer is not death but perpetual torment, thus great that it makes him long for death, and thus small that it brings death no nearer. And in this sort did a gentleman use his wife, as you shall hear."

## NOVEL XXXII.

*The notable manner in which a gentleman punished his wife whom he had taken in adultery.*

King Charles, the Eighth of his name, sent into Germany a gentleman named Bernage,[1] lord of Sivray,

[1] "In the Hundred Novels of the Queen of Navarre," wrote Brantôme in his "Dames Galantes," "you will find the saddest and most beautiful story that you can imagine on this subject. . . . I speak of the adventure of that fair lady of Germany whom her husband constrained to drink every day out of the skull of her dead lover, slain at his hands. And this piteous spectacle was actually witnessed by my Lord Bernage, who at that time was the ambassador of King Charles VIII." Bernage or Vernaiges was instituted Master of the Horse to Charles VIII. in the year 1495.

near Amboise, who to make good speed spared not to journey by day nor night, and so one evening came very late to a house and asked there for lodging. At this great difficulty was made, but when the master understood how great a king he served, he entreated him not to take in bad part the churlishness of his servants, since, by reason of certain kinsfolk of his wife, who were fain to do him a hurt, it was necessary that the house should be under strict ward. Then the aforesaid Bernage told him the reason of his embassage, which the gentleman offered to forward with all his might, and led him into his house, where he honourably lodged and entertained him.

It was now supper-time, and the gentleman brought him into a large room, bravely hung with tapestry work. And as the meats were set upon the table there came a woman from behind the tapestry, of a most surpassing beauty, but her head was shorn and the rest of her body was clothed in black gear of the German fashion. After that the gentleman had washed his hands with Bernage, water was borne to the lady, who when she had washed her hands sat herself down at the bottom of the table, without a word from her or to her. My lord de Bernage looked at her very attentively, and she seemed one of the comeliest women he ever had beheld, save that the manner of her countenance was pale and melancholic. And when she had eaten a little she asked for drink, and this was brought her by a servant in a most marvellous vessel, I would say a death's-head with the eyes closed up with silver,[1] and so

[1] This unholy drinking-cup will recall to the memory of the reader the fantasy of a more famous German, Alboin, King of the Lombards, who constrained his wife to drink his health out of a goblet made from her father's skull.

from this she drank three or four times. And her supper having come to an end she washed her hands, and with a reverence to the lord of the house she returned behind the tapestry without a word to anyone. Bernage was so astonished to see so strange a case that he fell into a thoughtful melancholy, which being perceived of the gentleman, he said to him: "I know well that you marvel within yourself at what you have seen done at this table; and for that I judge you to be an honourable man, I will not conceal the affair from you, to the intent that you may not think there is so great cruelty in me without a weighty cause. The lady you have seen is my wife, whom I loved as man never loved before, so much indeed that to wed her I forgot all fear and brought her here by force against the will of her kinsfolk. And she in like manner gave me so many evident proofs of her love that I would have risked ten thousand lives to bring her here as I did, to the delight of the pair of us, and we lived awhile in such quietness and contentment that I esteemed myself the most fortunate gentleman in all Christendom. But while I was away on a journey made for the sake of my honour, she so far forgot her virtue, her conscience, and the love she had for me, that she fell in love with a young gentleman whom I had brought up in my house, and this I perceived upon my coming home. Yet I loved her so well that I was not able to distrust her till with my own eyes I saw what I feared more than death. Then was my love turned to madness and my trust to despair; and so well did I play the spy upon her that one day, feigning to go out, I hid myself in the room which is now her dwelling-place. And very soon after she saw me go, she went away and made the young

man come to her, and fondled him in such a fashion as belonged to me alone. Then did I come forth from my hiding-place, and, taking him between her very arms, there I put him to death. And since the offence of my wife seemed to me so great that death would not suffice for her punishment, I appointed one that I deem is much more bitter than death to her: namely, to shut her up in the room where she had her greatest pleasures of him she loved more than me; and there I have set all the bones of her lover in an aumbry, as a precious thing and worthy of safe keeping. And to the end that in eating and drinking she may not lose the memory of him, I have made her be served at table from the head of that villain in place of a cup, and this in my presence; so that she may see him alive whom she has made through her sin a mortal enemy; and, dead for love of her, she may behold the man she preferred before me. Thus at dinner and supper she gazes on the two things which most should make her to despair; the living enemy and the dead lover; and all through her own sin. For the rest, I treat her as myself, save that she goes shorn, for an array of hair doth not belong to a woman taken in adultery, nor the veil to an harlot. Wherefore her hair is cut, showing that she has lost the honour of virginity and purity. And if it be your pleasure to see her, I will take you there."

To this Bernage willingly agreed; and they went down the stair and found her in a fine room, sitting alone before a fire. Then the gentleman drew a curtain that was before a high aumbry, and in it were hanging all the bones of the dead man. Bernage had a great desire to speak with the lady, but for fear of the husband durst not do it. He perceiving this, said to him: "An

it please you to say anything to her, you shall see how admirably she talks." Forthwith Bernage said: "Mistress, your long-suffering and your torment are alike great. I hold you for the most wretched of all women." The lady, with tears in her eyes, graciously yet most humbly answered him: "Sir, I confess my sin to be so great that all the ills the lord of this place (for I am not worthy that I should call him husband) can bestow upon me, are as nothing compared with my sorrow that I have done him a displeasure." So saying she fell to weeping bitterly; and the gentleman took Bernage by the arm and led him away. And very early on the morrow he went on to execute the charge given him of the King. But, in bidding the gentleman farewell, he could not refrain from saying to him: "Sir, the love I bear you, and the honour and privity you have used towards me in this your house, constrain me to tell you that, in my opinion, seeing the repentance of your poor wife, you should have compassion on her. Furthermore, you being still young have no children, and it would be a great pity that such a brave line as yours should come to an end, and they for whom, perchance, you have no great love, should be your heirs." The gentleman, who had resolved never again to speak to his wife, thought for a long while on what my lord de Bernage had said to him, and finding him to be in the right, promised that if she continued in her humble repentance he would one day have compassion on her. And so Bernage went forth on his embassage. And when he was returned to the King his master, he told him the whole matter, which the prince, having made inquiry, found to be as he had said. And among other things, Bernage having spoken of the lady's beauty, the

King sent his painter, John of Paris,[1] thither, that he might draw her to the life. This he did, and with the consent thereto of her husband, who, beholding her long repentance, and having a great desire for children, took pity on his wife, who with such humbleness had borne her punishment, and, taking her back to him, had of her many brave children.

"If all, ladies, in like case, drank out of like vessels, I am afraid that many a golden cup would be turned into a death's-head. God preserve us from the like, for if His goodness do not keep us, there is not one of us that may not fare worse. But having confidence in Him, He will have a care to them that confess they are not able to have a care to themselves; and they that trust in their own strength stand in jeopardy of being so tempted as to be constrained to confess their frailty. The high-minded I have often seen to stumble and to fall, whilst they that were of less reputation went safe and sound. To this intent is the old saw: *What God keeps is well kept.*" "Her punishment," said Parlamente, "I deem mighty reasonable, for, when the crime is worse than death, so also should be the punishment." But Ennasuitte said: "I am by no means of your opinion, for I would rather look upon the bones of my

[1] John of Paris—Jean Perréal, known as John of Paris—was a painter, who came into fashion in the Court at Lyons about the year 1490. He was in favour under Charles VIII., and still more honoured by Louis XII.—a far more cultured and artistic personage than the amiable young barbarian he succeeded. One of the first acts of Louis XII. was to make Jean Perréal Painter to the King; one of his last acts, sixteen years later, was to send Jean Perréal to England to fetch the beautiful sister of Henry VIII. to France. Three months later Jean Perréal had the melancholy honour of arranging the funeral of his constant patron. Under Francis I. he lived in plenty and renown. His portraits were especially esteemed.

lover all the days of my life than die for his sake, since there is nothing ill-done that cannot be amended, but when one is ended one cannot be amended." "How then would you mend shame?" said Longarine, "for you know that when a woman has done a deed of this kind her honour can by no means be repaired, do she what she may." "Prithee, then," answered Ennasuitte, "tell me whether the Magdalen has not now more honour among men than her sister, who was a maid." "I confess," said Longarine, "that she is praised of us for the great love she bore to Jesus Christ, and for her repentance; yet the name of *Sinner* abides with her always." "I care not," said Ennasuitte, "how men call me, for if I be forgiven of God, and likewise of my husband, there is nothing for which I am fain to die." "If this dame loved her husband as she ought," said Dagoucin, "I marvel how it was she did not die of grief as she looked upon the bones of him whom, by her sin, she had sent to death." "What! Dagoucin," said Simontault," "have you yet to learn that in women dwells neither love nor regret?" "I have yet to learn it," answered Dagoucin, "for I have never yet made trial of their love, lest haply I find it less than I desire." "You live then on faith and hope," said Nomerfide, "as the plover does on wind? Truly you are easy to be fed." "I hold myself content," said he, "with the love that I know is in me, and with the hope that it is in my lady's heart likewise. But if I was assured that as I hope so it is, I should be in such delight that I could not bear it and live."

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"And yet," said Nomerfide, "although you are thus in love with silence and reserve, there is nothing more

pleasant than to speak out the thoughts of one's heart." "It causes merriment," answered Longarine, "so I suppose you give your opinion from your own habit." "I tell you," said Nomerfide, "that I see fools, unless they die violently, live longer than the wise and prudent, and there can be but one reason, that they do not hide their passion. If they be wrathful they deal out blows, and if they be merry they laugh; but they that deem themselves to be wise so conceal their imperfections that their hearts are all corrupted thereby." "Methinks," said Geburon, "you say well, and that hypocrisy, be it towards God, men, or Nature, is the cause of all evil." "This would be a brave thing," said Parlamente, "if our hearts were so fulfilled of Him who is all virtuousness and all gladness, that we could freely show them to the whole world." "That will be on the day when there is no longer any flesh on our bones," said Hircan. "Yet," said Oisille, "the Spirit of God, who is stronger than death, can so mortify our heart within us, without change or decay of the body." "Mistress," said Saffredent, "you speak of a gift of God, scarcely partaken of by men." "'Tis partaken of," said she, "by them that have faith, but since it skills not to speak on this matter, let us know to whom Simontault gives his vote." "I give it," said he, "to Nomerfide, for as her heart is glad, her words will not be sad." "Truly," said Nomerfide, "since you desire to laugh I will take the occasion. And that you may know how hurtful are fear and ignorance, and that not to understand a word is often a cause of evil, I will tell you of a case that befel two Grey Friars at Niort, who, through not understanding the words of a butcher, were in fear of death."

## NOVEL XXXIV.

*A very merry case of two Grey Friars who lodged in the house of a butcher.*

There is a village betwixt Niort and Fors named Grip, the which appertains to the Manor of Fors. And it fell out that one day two Grey Friars, journeying from Niort, came very late to this place Grip, and lodged in the house of a butcher. And since between their room and that of their host there were but boards badly joined, they became desirous of hearing the discourse of the husband and wife in bed together, setting their ears to the boards that were nearest to the bed. And the husband having no suspicion of his guests, talked with his wife upon the private concerns of their household. "Sweetheart," said he, "I must needs rise early on the morrow that I may go see our Grey Friars, for one of them is a mighty fat fellow. Him we will kill, and if we salt him forthwith he will greatly profit us." And though his discourse was on his pigs, which he called *Grey Friars*, yet the two poor brethren, who heard this awful doom, were well persuaded that it was for them, and in fear and trembling waited the dawn of day. Now the one of them was exceeding fat, and the other somewhat lean. And the fat friar was fain to make his confession to his fellow, for, as he said, the rogue butcher, having ceased to walk in the fear and love of God, would make no more ado of slaughtering them than an ox or any other animal. And seeing that they were shut up in their room, and were not able to get out unless they passed through that of their host, they should hold themselves as dead men, and com-

mend their souls to God. But the young friar, who was not so overcome with fear as was his fellow, said that since the door was shut on them, they must essay a passage through the window, and at the worst they could meet with nothing more grievous than death. To this the fat friar agreed. The young one opened the window, and seeing that it was not too far from the ground, leapt down and fled away without so much as waiting for his companion. And he likewise essayed this hazardous jump, but in place of leaping fell so heavily, by reason of his weight, that he was sorely hurt in one of his legs and could not stir from the ground.

And seeing himself to be abandoned by his fellow, and not able to follow him, he looked all around for a hiding place, and saw nothing better than the pigsty, whither he crawled as well as might be. And as he opened the door to hide himself within, out rushed two monstrous pigs, in whose place the poor friar bestowed himself, hoping that, when he heard the noise of folk passing by, he could call out and be succoured. But so soon as the morning was come the butcher made ready his mightiest knives, and would have his wife bear him company while he went to kill his fat pig. And when he came to the sty, where the friar had hidden himself, he began to bellow at the top of his voice as he opened the little door: "Come out! come out! master Grey Friar, for it is my fixed intent this very day to taste your chitterlings!" The poor friar, not being able to stand on his legs, crawled out of the sty on his hands and knees, crying as loud as he was able for mercy. But if the friar was in great terror, the butcher and his wife were in no less, for they thought that St Francis

was wrathful with them because they called a beast a *Grey Friar*, and so fell on their knees before the poor man, asking forgiveness of St Francis and all his whole order. So on one side was the friar imploring mercy of the butcher, and on the other the butcher craving forgiveness of the friar, in such sort that it was a full quarter of an hour before they were assured of one another. At last the good father, understanding the butcher wished him no harm, declared wherefore he had hidden himself in the sty, at which their fear was forthwith converted to laughter, save for the poor Grey Friar, whose leg was too sore to let him make merry. But the butcher took him into his house and entreated him mighty well. As to his fellow, who had left him in his necessity, he had run all night, and about the hour of prime came to the manor-house of the lord of Fors. Here he made complaint of the butcher, whom he suspected had killed his companion, since he had not followed after him. The lord of Fors sent forthwith to Grip to know the truth of the matter, which being found out was by no means judged an occasion for weeping. And the lord of Fors told it to his mistress, the Duchess of Angoulême, mother of King Francis I.

"So, ladies, 'tis not a good thing to listen to other folk's secrets, lest haply one hear ill of oneself." "Did I not know," said Simontault, "that Nomerfide would give us no reason to weep, but rather to laugh? And this I think we all of us have done to admiration." "And what is the cause of it," said Oisille, "that we are always more inclined to laugh at idle folly than true wit?" "For that," said Hircan, "it is more pleasant and more like our own nature, which of itself is never

wise; and like always is attached to like—fools to folly, and wise men to wit. Yet I am persuaded that any, be he fool or wise man, could not refrain from laughing at this tale." "There are men," said Geburon, "whose heart is so possessed by a love of wisdom, that for all the tales they may hear they will never laugh; for they have a gladness of the soul and a well-moderated contentment that nothing can move." "What folk are these?" said Hircan. "The philosophers of old days," said Geburon, "by whom nor joy nor sorrow were at all experienced, or, at the least, they showed them not; so great glory did they think it to conquer themselves and their passions. And I esteem it a good thing to do as they did, and conquer a vicious passion, but as to a natural desire leading to no evil, this seems a profitless victory. But yet they esteemed it a great virtue." "It is not said," answered Saffredent, "that they were all wise men; and haply there was more appearance of sense and virtue in them than reality." "Natheless," said Geburon, "you will see that they rebuked all evil; and Diogenes himself trod on the bed of Plato, it being too rare and curious for his liking, to show that he despised and would fain put under his feet Plato his vainglory and covetousness. 'I trample upon and despise,' said he, 'the pride of Plato.'" "But you tell not the whole," said Saffredent, "for Plato answered that his trampling was but pride of another kind." "In truth," said Parlamente, "'tis not possible that this conquest over ourselves can be accomplished by ourselves, save with a monstrous pride especially to be avoided, since it engenders the death and destruction of all the other virtues." "Did I not read to you this morning," said Oisille, "how that they who trusted themselves to be

more wise than other men, and who by the light of reason came to know a God, a creator of all things, yet fixing this glory on themselves, and not on Him whence it came, thinking by their own toil they had come to this knowledge, were made not only more ignorant and void of reason than other men, but even than fourfooted beasts? For since they had erred in their minds, attributing to themselves that is God's alone, they showed their errors by bodily disorders, forgetting and perverting their sex as St Paul to-day declared to us in the Epistle to the Romans." "There is not one of us," said Parlamente, "that will not confess that sin is the fruit of inward evil; which the more it is concealed by an outward show of virtue, the more it is hard to be plucked out." "We men," said Hircan, "are nearer to salvation than you; for since we conceal not our fruits the tree is easily known; but you who dare not show the fruits, and do such brave outward works, are hardly able to discover that great tree of pride, which, well concealed, grows fast." "I confess," replied Longarine, "that if the word of God doth not show us by faith the leprosy of infidelity that is hidden in our hearts, God does us good service when we fall into some open sin, by the which the secret plague becomes clearly manifest. And happy are they whom faith has so humbled that they have no need of making trial of their sinful nature by its outward effects." "But consider," said Simontault, "how we are going on, for setting out from a most foolish tale we are now deep in theology and philosophy. Let us leave these matters to them that are more fit for such musings, and ask to whom Nomerfide gives her vote." . . . "Give it," said Longarine, "to Saffredent." "I hope then," said Saff-

redent, "to make plain my example that God shows no favour unto lovers. And although it has been said that vice is common to men and women, yet a crafty device shall be found more quickly and after a more subtile fashion by a woman than by a man. And this I tell you for an example of it."

## NOVEL XXXIX.

*In what manner my lord of Grignaulx exorcised an evil spirit.*

A certain lord of Grignaulx,[1] Esquire of the Body to Anne Duchess of Brittany and Queen of France, returning to his house, from which he had been absent more than two years, found his wife at another demesne hard-by. And when he would know the reason of this, she told him there was a ghost in their own house that tormented them so much that none could live in it. My lord de Grignaulx, who put no belief in such fantasies, told her that he feared it not, were it the very devil, and so brought his wife to the house. And at night-time he

[1] Jean de Talleyrand, Seigneur de Grignols, married Marguerite de la Tour de Turenne. He was a man of a certain caustic, irreverent, and cynical humour. It was he who, when the severe and dignified Queen Anne wished to say some words of personal welcome to the Spanish Ambassadors, taught her "quelque petite salauderie," so out of place upon those correct and orthodox lips that her husband, Louis XII., shaking with laughter, beseeched her never to speak in Spanish again. It was all very well for King Louis to laugh; he was fond of laughter, and not fond at all of Spain. But Queen Anne was a pure, reticent, and honest woman; she was hurt in her personal dignity, and she was hurt also as a Sovereign. She wished above all things to cement the projected Franco-Austrian-Spanish alliance, and to marry her daughter Claude to Charles V. It was thus a double vexation to her to appear ridiculous, and perhaps insulting, to the ambassador of Spain. She was deeply angry with Grignols, and the most earnest entreaties of her husband were needed to induce her to forgive him in the end.

lighted many candles to see the ghost more clearly, and. after watching a long while to no purpose, fell asleep But on a sudden he was wakened by a mighty buffet on the cheek, and he heard a voice crying aloud : *Brenigue, Brenigue*, and this was the name of his grandmother. Then he called his wife who lay beside him to light a candle, for they were all put out, but she durst not rise from the bed. Straightway he felt the quilt pulled from off him, and heard a great noise of tables, trestles, dan stools falling all about the room ; and it ceased not all through the night. And he was more troubled in that he had lost his rest than for fear of the ghost, for he by no means believed it to have been such, and the next night he determined to take Master Goblin a prisoner. So a little after he was come to bed he made a great pretence of snoring loudly, and put his hand open near his face. And while he waited he knew that something was approaching him, and so snored all the more. At this the ghost, taking heart, gave him a mighty buffet, whereupon my lord de Grignaulx took his hand from his face and seized it, crying to his wife : "I have the ghost." And she rose and lighted a candle, and they found it was the maid that slept in their room, who falling on her knees entreated forgiveness, and promised to tell the truth. And this was that she had for a long while loved a serving man of the house, and so had undertaken this brave mystery, thereby to drive from the house the master and mistress, so that they, who would have had all the care of it, should have means of entertaining one another, which indeed when they were all alone they by no means failed to do. My lord de Grignaulx, who was a somewhat surly man, commanded that they should be beaten in such sort

that they would never forget the ghost, and this having been done, they were driven away. And thus was the house freed from the ghostly torments that had plagued it throughout two whole years.

"'Tis a wondrous thing, ladies, to think what this mighty god of love can do. From women it takes away all fear, and makes them to torment men so that they may gain their desire. But in like measure, as the serving-maid is to be blamed, so is the master to be praised for his good sense, that knew the spirit returneth not from the place whither it has gone." "Of a truth," said Geburon, "Love showed small favour to the maid and the man, and I confess their master's good sense stood him in good stead." "Yet," said Ennasuitte, "the wench, by reason of her craftiness, lived a long while at her ease." "'Tis a pitiful kind of ease," said Oisille, "built upon sin, and ending in punishment and shame." "That is true," answered Ennasuitte, "but many folk have sorrow and suffering while they live righteously, not having the wit all their days to take their portion of pleasure as did these two." "Yet I am steadfast in my opinion," said Oisille, "that no pleasure can be perfect, save the conscience is at rest." "Are you advised of this?" said Simontault; "the Italian author would maintain that the greater the sin the greater the pleasure." "Of a truth," said Oisille, "he that said so is himself the very devil. Wherefore enough of him, and let us know to whom Saffredent will give his vote." "To whom?" said he. "None but Parlamente remains, but if there were a hundred I would still give my vote to her, since thereby we shall learn something." "Since, then, I am to bring the day to an end," said Parlamente, "and since I promised

yesterday to tell you for what reason the father of Rolandine made build the castle where he kept her so long captive, I will even do so."

## NOVEL XL.

*Wherein is given the cause wherefore Rolandine's father made build the castle in the forest.*

The father of Rolandine, who was entitled the Count of Jossebelin,[1] had several sisters, of whom some were married to exceeding rich men, and the rest were nuns, save one who lived in his house unmarried, though beyond compare she was prettier than all the others. And so well was she beloved of her brother that he preferred before her neither wife nor children. And she was asked in marriage by many of good estate; but her brother, for fear of the separation, and loving too well his money, would not listen to them. So she passed some time without being wed, living virtuously in her brother's house. Now there lived there also a

[1] Jean de Rohan, Viscomte de Rohan, Comte de Porhoët, Comte de Léon, Comte de la Garnache, counted among his vast possessions the town of Josselin, from which, with very slight disguise, he takes his title here. Josselin is also a name familiar in the history of the Rohans. Jean de Rohan was the son of Alain IX. de Rohan, and his half-sister married John, Count of Angoulême, the grandfather of Margaret. Rolandine was therefore her cousin, à la mode de Bretagne, and this accounts for the fact that Parlamente tells both the stories concerning her. Jean de Rohan had several half-sisters, all nuns or married, as the novel relates. By his own mother, Marie de Lorraine, he had only one sister, Catherine de Rohan, who died unmarried. She, of course, is the heroine of this adventure. Jean II. de Rohan was actually in prison several years for the murder of a certain René Comte de Kéradreux, and this crime is doubtless the occasion of our story. He was present at the marriage of Francis of Angoulême in 1507. He died in 1510.

young and comely gentleman, who having been brought up by the Count from his childhood, so grew in comely stature and virtuousness of living, that he bore a peaceful rule over his master, in such sort that when he had any charges for his sister, it was ever the young gentleman that gave them. And with such familiarity did the Count use him, that evening and morning would he send him to his sister, so that by this frequent converse together a great love was engendered between them. But since he feared for his life if he should haply offend his master, and she had no less fear for her honour, they had in this love of theirs none other contentment save words only. And the lord of Jossebelin would often say to his sister that he wished the gentleman was richer, and of as good a house as she, for he knew no man he would have liked better for his brother-in-law. So many times did he say this, that the lovers, having taken counsel together, judged that if they were to wed he would readily pardon them. And Love, that easily believes what it wishes, made them to suppose that nothing but good could come of it; and so on this hope their marriage was solemnised and consummated, and none knew thereof but a priest and certain women.

And after that they had lived for some years in the delight that a married pair can have together, as one of the bravest in all Christendom, and bound by the greatest and most perfect love, Fortune, that hated to see two persons so much at their ease, stirred up an enemy against them, who spying out the lady, perceived her great happiness in her husband, but yet knew not that they were married. And this man came to the lord of Jossebelin, saying that the gentleman in whom he had so great trust went too much into his sister's

room, and at hours in the night when it was not meet for men to enter therein. And this the count at the first would not believe, for the trust he had in his sister and the gentleman ; but the enemy, as one who loved the honour of his house, so many times repeated it, that at last a watch was put, and so shrewd a one that the poor folk, suspecting nothing, were surprised. For one evening the Lord of Jossebelin was advertised that the gentleman was in his sister's room, and presently going thither he found them, blinded by their love, in bed together. Wrath took away speech, and drawing his sword he ran at the gentleman. But he, being agile in body, fled from him in his shirt, and not able to escape by the door let himself down by a window into the garden. The poor lady threw herself on her knees before her brother, and said to him : "O sir, save my husband's life, for indeed I have wed him, and if there be any fault, punish me alone, for he married me at my desire." Her brother, beside himself with wrath, only replied to her : "If he be a hundred times your husband, yet will I punish him as a wicked servant who hath deceived me." So saying he set himself at the window and cried with a loud voice to kill him, and so it was done straightway by his command and before the eyes of him and his sister. But she, beholding his piteous sight, and knowing that prayers were of no avail, spoke to her brother as a mad woman, saying : "Brother, I have nor father nor mother, and am come to an age at which I can marry according to my pleasure, and so chose one whom oftentimes you have said you were fain had been my husband. And for that I did by your counsel a thing I could by the law have done without your consent, you have bid your servants kill the man

for whom you had a great liking. And since no prayers of mine could prevent his death, I entreat you by all your love towards me to make me in this hour a fellow with him in death, as I have been in all his other chances. And so you will both satisfy your cruel and unjust anger, and give rest to the body and soul of her who nor can nor will live without him." Her brother, though he was in such a rage as almost took away his reason, yet had such pity on his sister that, without granting or refusing her prayer, he left her. And after that he had well considered the deed he had done, and understood that the gentleman had married his sister, he would have been heartily glad not to have committed such a crime. But for the fear he had lest his sister should demand vengeance and justice on him, he had built for her a castle in the midst of a forest, whither he placed her, and forbade any to speak with her.

And after some time, to satisfy his conscience, he essayed to win her back to him, and made some talk about marriage; but she sent word to him that he had given her so ill a breakfast that she wished not to sup off the same meat, and that she had a good hope to live in such wise that he would have no second husband of hers to put to death, and that she hardly thought he would forgive another, since he had used so evilly the man for whom he had such a liking. And though she was weak, and had not the power to avenge herself on him, yet she trusted in Him who is the true judge and suffers no evil deed to go unpunished. And with His love alone she intended to pass the remainder of her days in her retreat. This she did, and stirred not from the place till her death, living in such patience and austerity that men came from all parts to her sepulchre

as to that of a saint. And from the time she died her brother's house came to such a ruinous condition that of six sons he had not one that was left alive, for they all perished miserably; and at last the heritage passed, as you have heard in another tale, to his daughter Rolandine, who was kept in the prison that was made for her aunt.

"I pray God, ladies, that this example be so profitable to you that none amongst you shall have any desire to be married for her own pleasure without the consent of them to whom obedience is due; for matrimony is so long-lasting an estate that one ought not lightly to enter upon it, nor without the advice of our best friends and kinsfolk. And do as well as you may, there will be no less pain in it than pleasure." "In good faith," said Oisille, "were there no God nor law to teach maids to be prudent, this example would suffice to make them take more heed to their kin and not marry at their own pleasure." "Yet," said Nomerfide, "she who has one good day in the year is not unhappy all her life. She had the pleasure of seeing and speaking for a long while with him whom she loved better than herself, nay more, she enjoyed his affection without scruple or stain on her conscience. So great do I esteem this contentment that I believe it surpassed all the sorrow that she bore." "You will have it, then," said Saffredent, "that women have more pleasure to love a man than pain to see him killed before their eyes?" "Not so," answered Nomerfide, "for then I should speak against the experience I have had of women; but I mean that an unwonted pleasure, such as to marry the man we love best of all, should be greater than the pain of losing him by death, for death is a

thing common enough." "Ay," said Geburon, "natural death; but this was over cruel. And it seems to me a strange matter, for he was neither her father nor her husband, but only her brother, and she was of an age lawfully to marry whom she would. How then durst he do this cruel deed?" "I find it no strange matter," said Hircan, "for his sister, whom he loved and who was beyond his power, he did not kill, but only the gentleman whom he had brought up as his son and loved as his brother, and after having given him honour and wealth in his service, he took his sister in marriage, the which by no means did appertain to him." "Likewise," said Nomerfide," "'twas no common nor wonted pleasure for a lady of a noble house to marry one of her gentleman servants for love. If the death was strange, so also was the delight, since it had against it the opinion of all wise men, and for it the contentment of a heart full of love, and a restful soul, since God was by no means offended at it. And as to the death which you call cruel, methinks, since we must all die, the shortest death is the sweetest, for we know that it is a way we all must go. And I deem happy them that stay no long while before the gates thereof, and who from that we call *happiness* in this world, fly without delay to the true happiness that endureth for ever." "What call you the gates of death?" said Simontault. "They that are troubled in spirit," answered Nomerfide; "they that are for a long while sick, and from the extremity of suffering in mind and body, find death come too slowly; these, I say, tarry at the gates of death and shall tell you the resting-places, where is less rest than lamentation. This lady must have lost her husband by death, but, through the wrath of her brother, she was saved

from seeing him a long time sick or weary of life. And she, converting the joy she had with him to the service of our Lord, could well count herself happy." "Is this nothing," said Longarine, "that she was shamefully imprisoned?" "I suppose," said Nomerfide, "that one who loves with a perfect love and in obedience to God's commandment knows not shame nor dishonour, save when it lessens or diminishes the perfection of her love. For the glory of true love knows no shame; and as to the imprisoning of her body, I believe that since her heart was at large, joined to God and her husband, she made no account of it, but thought her loneliness great freedom. For inasmuch as she saw not what she loved she could have nought better than to think upon these without ceasing, and stone walls are not too narrow, when thought can pass through them at its pleasure."[1] "The words of Nomerfide are true altogether," said Simontault, "but he who did this thing in his madness would well be called unhappy, inasmuch as he offended God, love, and honour." "In good faith," said Geburon, "I marvel that the love of woman is so various a thing, and plainly see that the more virtuousness the more love, but those who have less love, wishing to appear virtuous, simulate it." "It is true," said Parlamente, "that a heart, honouring God and man, loves more than one that is vicious, and fears not to be seen to the very bottom." "I have ever heard," said Simontault, "that men are not to be reproved for seeking the love of women, since God hath put into their

[1] Nomerfide, according to my surmise, is Isabeau d'Albret, the wife of Rolandine's son, of the great-nephew of Catherine de Rohan. This would account for her tone of unusual feeling in discussing the tragic histories of her husband's house. Saffredent (René de Rohan) is silent upon both occasions.

hearts the love and boldness to ask; and in the hearts of women He hath put the fear and the chastity to refuse. So if a man use the powers given him and be punished, a wrong hath been done him." "But this was a hard matter," said Longarine, "that he had a long time praised him to his sister. Methinks his brain-sick cruelty is like unto a man that kept a fountain, and praised the beauty of the water to one who while he looked on it fainted with thirst. But when the thirsty soul would fain have tasted the water, the keeper killed him." "Truly," said Parlamente, "by the sweetness of his words he kindled a flame that he should by no means have put out with the sword." "I marvel," said Simontault, "that it was taken ill for a simple gentleman, using no force or pretence, to take to wife a woman of a noble house, since the philosophers consider the least of men to be more worth than the mightiest and most virtuous woman in the world." "To the intent that the Commonwealth should be ordered peacefully," said Dagoucin; "for this reason, they take account alone of the rank of the families, the age of the parties, and the ordinances of the laws, without weighing the love or the virtue of men, and all this lest things be turned upside down. Whence it comes that in marriages made between equals, according to the judgment of kinsfolk and all men, man and wife are often so diverse in heart, complexion, and disposition, that in place of entering upon an estate leading to salvation, they journey to the by-ways that are about Hell." "Also," said Geburon, "it has come to pass that they who married for love, without regard to rank or lineage, having like hearts, complexions, and dispositions, have nevertheless repented them of their

folly. For a great love that knows no reason turns often to brainsick jealousy." "It seems to me," said Parlamente, "that neither the one way nor the other is praiseworthy; but that folk should submit themselves to the will of God without regard to rank, or riches, or pleasure; but loving with a virtuous love, and with the goodwill of their kinsfolk, they should desire to live in the estate of marriage as God and nature have ordained. And though in this life there be no estate but has its tribulation, yet have I seen these last spend their days without regret; and we married folk here present are not so unhappy that some of us are not in this number." Forthwith Hircan, Geburon, Simontault, and Saffredent swore that they had married after this sort, and had never repented thereof; and whatsoever of truth there was in it, their wives were so content thereat, that thinking they could hear nothing more to their taste, they went to the church to give thanks to God on that account, and found there the monks ready to sing evensong. Service ended, they went to supper, not without much talk of their marriages, the which lasted all the evening, as they told the changes and chances that befel them while they courted their wives. But though these stories were no less pleasant than those in the meadow, they cannot be set down at length, insomuch as one would break into the speech of another. So great delight did they take therein that bedtime came before they were ware of it. Mistress Oisille made the company separate, and so joyously did they go to bed, that I believe the married folk slept no longer than the rest, telling again of their loves that were overpast. And in such pleasant sort was passed the night, even until the morning.

# DAY THE FIFTH.

ON THE FIFTH DAY RELATION IS MADE OF THE VIRTUOUSNESS OF SUCH MAIDS AND WIVES OF WHOM HONOUR HATH BEEN PREFERRED BEFORE PLEASURE; OF THEM LIKEWISE WHO HAVE DONE THE CONTRARY THERETO; AND OF THE SIMPLENESS OF CERTAIN OTHERS.

## PROLOGUE.

WHEN the morning was come Oisille had made ready for them a spiritual breakfast of such good savour, that it was sufficient both for body and soul; and at the hearing of it the whole company was mighty attentive, and it seemed to them that they had never heard a sermon to such profit before. And when they heard the last bell ring for mass, they went into the church to meditate on the godly discourse they had heard. After mass was heard, and they had sauntered about for a while, they set themselves at table, promising one another that the present day should be as brave as any that went before. And Saffredent said that he would the bridge was another month a-building, for the delight he had in their entertainment; but my lord abbot made the workmen use great diligence, since it was by no means to his pleasure to live among so many honest folk into whose presence he could not bring his accustomed female pilgrims. And when they had rested some while after dinner they returned to the meadow, where, each having taken his seat, they asked Par-

lamente to whom she would give her vote. . . . "Methinks," said she, "Saffredent would do well to begin the day, for he will make us merry. . . . . "Nay, for that I give *you* my vote, Nomerfide," said Geburon, "and, prithee, forget you are a woman, that we may learn what it is that men accounted truthful tell of the folly of your sex." "Since virtue will have it so, and you give me your vote, I will tell you what I know. I have heard none here, be it man or woman, that has spared to speak evil of the friars, and for the compassion I have for them, I am resolved to speak well of them."

## NOVEL XLIV.

*How a Grey Friar for telling the truth receives two pigs in place of one.*

There came a Grey Friar to my lady of Sedan, who was of the house and lineage of Croy, asking of her a pig, which every year she gave them for an alms. My lord of Sedan, who was a wise man and of a pleasant speech, made the good father to eat at their table, and amongst other talk said to him, to put him in the lists: "You do well, father, to ask for alms, while you are yet unknown; for I greatly fear, when once your hypocrisy is discovered, you will eat no longer the bread of the poor children, gained in the sweat of the father's brow." The friar was in no wise taken aback by this, but replied: "My lord, our Order is on such a sure foundation, that while the world remains it will endure; for this foundation will never fail while man and woman inhabit the earth." My lord of Sedan was very desirous

to know what was this foundation, and earnestly prayed the friar to tell him, who after many excuses at last said: "Since you are pleased to command me to tell you, you shall know that our Order is built upon the foolishness of women, and as long as the world hold a silly woman or a foolish, we shall not die of hunger." My lady of Sedan, being of a choleric complexion, at the hearing of this grew so wrath, that had her husband not been there, she would have done the friar a hurt, and swore a great oath that he should not have the pig she had promised him; but my lord of Sedan, for that the friar had not concealed the truth, swore he should have two pigs, and made take them to his monastery.

"So it was, ladies, that the friar, being sure the benefits of the ladies would never fail him, found means by concealing nothing of the truth, to have the favour and the alms of men; if he had been a flatterer and dissembler he would have been more agreeable to the ladies, but not so profitable to himself and his brethren." The novel was not brought to an end without much laughter from all the company, and most of all from them that knew the lord and lady of Sedan. And Hircan said: "The friars then should by no means endeavour by their preaching to make the women wise, seeing that their foolishness doth so much profit them." And Parlamente said: "They do not by their preaching endeavour to make women wise, but to make them think themselves wise; for they that are altogether foolish and worldly give them no great alms, but they who for that they often go to the monastery church, and carry with them paternosters marked with deaths-heads, and wear their hoods lower than other women, think to be esteemed wise, but are in truth foolish. For

they ground their salvation on the confidence they have in these sons of iniquity, whom for their outward appearance they think to be well nigh gods." "But how shall we not believe on them," said Ennasuitte, "being that they are ordained of our prelates to preach the gospel to us, and to reprove us of our vices?" "Because," said Parlamente, "we have discovered their hypocrisy, and know the diversity between the teaching of God and the teaching of the devil." "Jesus!" said Ennasuitte, "do you think that they would dare to preach bad doctrine?" "Think, say you," said Parlamente, "nay, I am assured that they believe nothing less than the Gospel; I speak of the bad amongst them, for I have known many an honest friar who preached the word in all purity and simplicity, and lived without scandal, ambition, or covetousness, and with a pure and chaste heart, neither feigned nor constrained. But with such good stones as these the streets are not paved—nay, rather for the most part with the contrary thereto; and the good tree beareth good fruit." "I thought of a surety," said Ennasuitte, "that we were bound, under pain of mortal sin, to believe whatsoever they told us sitting in the chair of truth; that is, when they preached only what is in the Scripture, or in the comments of the holy doctors of the Church." "For my part," said Parlamente, "I cannot be ignorant that there have been amongst them men of very bad faith, and notably one Colimant, a brother of the Order, and a doctor in theology, and a preacher of great repute, was fain to persuade some of the brethren that the Gospel is not more worthy of belief than Cæsar his Commentaries, or any other authentic history,[1] and

[1] In the beginning of the sixteenth century the enthusiasm for Greek

from that hour I have not placed my trust in the words of any of their preachers, if I found it not conformable to the word of God, which is the true touchstone whereby we can know truth from lies." "Be assured," said Oisille, "that they who often humbly read therein will never be deceived by fables devised of men, for he that hath a mind filled with all truth can by no means receive a lie." "Yet," said Simontault, "methinks one of simple mind is more easy to be cozened than another." "Ay," said Longarine, "if you account foolishness simplicity." "I tell you," replied Simontault, "that a good woman, mild and simple, is more easy to be cozened than a crafty and malicious."

"I plainly see," said Oisille, "that if we heard Simontault his conclusions to the end, it would be compline and not evensong time, for he has the matter at heart. Wherefore let us begone to praise God that this day has been spent with no more grievous quarrel." So she arose, and all the rest followed her; but Simontault and Longarine ceased not their quarrel, and yet so gently was it ordered that Simontault, without drawing his sword, came off the conqueror, convincing her that the strongest passion was the greatest necessity. Thereupon they came into the quire, where the monks awaited them, and, having heard evensong, made their

philosophy had permeated society. Churchmen and Catholics openly discussed the question of the immortality of the soul, many asserting that the intelligent soul was mortal, or that all men shared in a universal soul. In December 1513, the Lateran Council found it necessary to assert the truth of Scripture, and to require belief in the individual soul. But this mild protest did not stem the current of free thought. The preacher Colimant had probably been in Italy, where no exception would have been taken to the comparison of Scripture with so respectable a classic as the Commentaries of Julius Cæsar.

supper as much off words as meat. For their talk lasted the whole while they were at board and far into the evening, till that Oisille said they would do well to give rest to their imaginations, and that the five days overpast were filled with such fine tales that she was in great fear lest the sixth should not equal them, since it were not possible, even should they invent them, to tell better tales than they had already recounted. But Geburon said that, as long as the world lasted, things would be done worthy to be had in remembrance. "For the wickedness of the wicked is always as it has been, and also the goodness of the good. So long as evil and good reign upon the earth they will ever accomplish new deeds, although it is written there is nothing new under the sun. But we, inasmuch as we are not called to the privy counsels of God, and therefore know not the causes of things, find all things new the more admirable that we ourselves cannot or will not do them, so be not afraid lest the days that are to come be worse than they that went before; and do you, for your part, endeavour to do your duty." Oisille said she commended herself to God, and in His name bade them good-night. So all the company departed, and the fifth day was brought to a close.

# DAY THE SIXTH.

ON THE SIXTH DAY RELATION IS MADE OF THE DECEITS BETWEEN MAN AND WOMAN, THROUGH COVETOUSNESS, VENGEANCE, AND CRAFTINESS.

## PROLOGUE.

On the morrow earlier than she was wont, Oisille went into the hall to make ready her lesson; and the company being advertised of this, for the desire they had to hear her wholesome exhortations, made such speed to dress themselves that she had no long time to wait. And perceiving their spirits to be stirred up, and having before expounded to them the Epistle of St Paul to the Romans, she on this day read to them the Epistle of St John the Divine, the which is full of all love. So pleasant was this refection to them that were present that, although they had been there a full half-hour over and above the accustomed time, yet the whole seemed not more than a quarter of an hour. From thence they passed to the adoration of the Blessed Sacrament, commending themselves to the Holy Ghost that what they had heard on that day might be profitable unto them. And after they had broken their fast and rested for a while, they went to the meadow for their wonted pastime. And Oisille asked who should make a beginning to the day. Longarine answered and said: "I give my vote to Mistress Oisille: for so good a

lesson hath she given us this morning, that she will doubtless tell us some story worthy of the same." "I am sorry," said Oisille, "that I cannot speak to you this afternoon as profitably as in the morning; nathe-less, the intent of my history shall not be at variance with that place of Holy Scripture where it is written: 'O, put not your trust in princes, nor in any child of man; for there is no help in them.' And to the end that this Scripture may not fall into forgetfulness for want of an example, I will give you a true one, and so fresh is it in men's memory that the tears are scarce wiped away from the eyes of them that saw this pitiful sight."

## NOVEL LI.

*The cruel and treacherous vengeance of an Italian nobleman upon a woman that had done him a displeasure.*

The Duke of Urbino,[1] named the Prefect, the same that took to wife the sister of the first Duke of Mantua, had a son of the age of eighteen or twenty years, who

[1] This is Francesco Maria Della Rovere, Duke of Urbino, nephew of Pope Julius II., who nominated him Prefect of Rome. His gallant defiance of Leo X., and the brave stand he made for his rights to Urbino, redeem his public character from the stains of a private vengeance. I do not know on what authority Queen Margaret gives this story (only too probable and too often paralleled in the records of Italian houses), but it is natural that the narrators of the "Heptameron" should rejoice to disparage the man who was the defeated rival and the bitter enemy of the father of Catherine de Medici. Francesco Maria Della Rovere married Eleonora Gonzaga, daughter of Francesco II., Duke of Mantua. He died, not without suspicion of poison, in the year 1538. Readers of this novel should remember the better appearance made by Duke Francesco in that infinitely more enchanting ancestor of the "Heptameron, the unrivalled Courtier of Baldassare Castiglione.

was in love with the daughter of a good and honourable house, and having the Abbot of Farse for her brother. And since, as the custom of the country is, he was not free to speak with her as he would, he used the help of a gentleman of his following, who was amorous of a young gentlewoman in the service of his mother, mighty pretty and virtuous, and by her the son of the Duke made known to his sweetheart the great affection he had for her. And this the girl thought no shame, taking pleasure in doing him a kindness, and esteeming his intent so good and honourable that she could do no harm by declaring it to his sweetheart. But the Duke, who cared more for the advantage of his house than for honest love, was greatly afraid lest these passages should bring his son into marriage with his mistress, and so kept a shrewd watch. And it was told him that this poor gentlewoman was mixed up in the complot and had given certain letters from his son to her he loved, whereat he was so wrathful, that he determined to take effectual order in the matter. Yet he could not disguise his anger so that the girl should not be advertised of it, and she knowing the craftiness of the Duke that it was great, and his conscience but small, fell into marvellous alarm, and came to the Duchess praying leave to get her gone to some place removed from his sight till his fury was overpast. Her mistress told her that she must first know her husband's will before she gave her leave: all the same she soon understood the Duke's mind towards her, and knowing his complexion, she not only gave her leave, but counselled her to enter a monastery till this storm was blown over. This she did as privily as she was able, but yet the Duke was advised of it, and putting on a feigned gladness, asked his wife

where was the gentlewoman, and she, thinking he knew the truth well, confessed it to him, at which he made a pretence of grief, saying she had no need of so doing, and that for his part he wished her no ill, and since the rumour of such things was hurtful, she would do well to come back. His wife replied that if the poor girl were so unhappy as to want his favours, it were better that for some time she should not appear in his presence, but he would give ear to none of her reasons, and bade her order her return. The Duchess failed not to declare to her the will of the Duke, but she could in no wise assure herself thereof, entreating her mistress not to make her thus tempt fortune, and saying she was persuaded that the Duke was not so ready to grant forgiveness as he feigned to be. Natheless the Duchess declared that she should take no hurt, and pledged her honour for her life. And the girl, knowing that her mistress loved her, and would not wantonly deceive her, put trust in her promise, thinking that the Duke would by no means break such a pledge wherein was engaged the honour of his wife, and so returned to the Duchess. But so soon as the Duke was ware of it, he forthwith came into his wife's room, and when he saw the girl, said to his wife: "And so such an one is returned?" Then went he back to his gentlemen, bidding them take her and clap her up in prison. At this the poor Duchess, who on her word had drawn her from the liberties of the monastery, became desperate, throwing herself on her knees before her husband, and entreating him for the love of her and her house not to do such a deed, since in obedience to him she had enticed her from the place where she was in safety. Yet no prayers that she could make availed at all to soften his hard heart, nor to overcome his fixed

resolve to take vengeance on her, so, not replying to his wife, he went quickly from her, and without form of justice, forgetting alike his God and the honour of his house, he cruelly had the poor gentlewoman hanged. I will not endeavour to tell you of the sorrow of the Duchess, for it was that which should befall an honourable lady and a kind-hearted, who against the pledge given of her, saw one die whom she was fain to have saved. Still less can be told the bitter grief of the poor gentleman her lover, who failed not to endeavour to the utmost to save his sweetheart's life, offering to die in her stead. But no manner of pity or compassion could touch this Duke, who knew none other happiness than to be avenged on his enemy. So was this innocent gentlewoman put to death by the cruel Duke against all law and honour, and to the great sorrow of them that knew her.

"Consider, ladies, what cometh of malice when it is joined to power." "I have heard," said Longarine, "that the Italians are subject to three vices in particular, but I never thought their cruel vengeance would have gone thus far, as for so small an occasion to send a woman to a shameful death." Saffredent, laughing, said to her: "Longarine, you have truly told us one of the three vices, but I would know as to the two others." "If you knew not," answered she, "I would tell you, but sure am I that you know them all." "Do you then esteem me," said Saffredent, "so exceeding vicious?" "Not so," answered Longarine, "but that you know so well the foulness of vice, that better than any other you can avoid it." "Marvel not," said Simontault, "at this piece of cruelty, for they that have been in Italy tell of such deeds that this is a mere peccadillo

by comparison."[1] "Truly," said Geburon, "when Rivolte was taken by the French, an Italian captain, accounted a brave soldier, seeing dead one who was only his enemy in that he was of an opposite faction, tore out his heart, and hastily roasting it, ate it. And he replied to certain that asked how it tasted, that he had never eaten so dainty a dish or one so savoury, and not content with this he killed the wife of the dead man, and snatching from her womb the fruit thereof, dashed it against a wall. Then he filled the two bodies of husband and wife with oats, and made his horses eat from them. Think you this man would not surely have put a girl to death, whom he suspected to have done him a wrong?" "It must be confessed," said Ennasuitte, "that the Duke had a greater fear lest his son should make a poor marriage, than desire to give him a wife according to his taste." "I suppose one cannot doubt," said Simontault, "that the habit of the Italians is to love more than nature things merely created for the service of the same." "Nay, and worse than this," said Hircan, "for they make a god of things that are against nature." "These be the sins I would tell you of," said Longarine, "for 'tis well known that to love money, beyond our honest necessities, is to commit idolatry." Parlamente said that St Paul had not forgotten the vices proper to the Italians and to all them who thought to pass and overcome other men in honour, prudence, and earthly reason, on which so strongly do they build themselves that they give not to God the glory that belongs to Him.

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[1] Rivolta was taken by Louis XII., 1509. A young Italian gentleman was executed when the French were in Naples in 1495, for having cut out and eaten the heart of a French soldier.

"There be those," said Nomerfide, "who have a far greater love for their monies than their conscience." "I pray you," said Saffredent, "tell us the tale, and I will give you my vote." "I had determined," said she, "not to tell so short a story, but since it comes to hand I will do so."

## NOVEL LV.

*How a widow sold a horse for a ducat and a cat for ninety and nine.*

In the town of Saragossa there lived a rich merchant, who seeing his death draw nigh, and that he could no longer keep what perchance he had gathered together by evil means, thought that if he made God a small present, it would be in some sort a satisfaction for his sins ; as if God would sell His grace for money. And when he had set his house in order, he said that he devised his fine Spanish horse to be sold at the highest price that could be got, and the money given to the poor ; praying his wife not to fail, so soon as he was dead, to sell the horse and distribute the money according to his desire. And when the burial of him was at an end, and the first tears had fallen, the wife, who was no more of a fool than other women of Spain, went to a servant who had likewise heard his master's pleasure, and said to him : "It seems to me that the loss of the husband I loved so well is enough for me to bear, without also losing his substance. Yet I would in nowise disobey his will, but rather do it after a more perfect manner, for the poor man, misled of the covetous priests, thought to do God a great service by giving, after his death, these monies, of which in his life he would not have given a single ducat in a case of extreme necessity,

as you well know. Wherefore I am of opinion that we do what he charged us at his death, and after a better fashion than he would have done himself had he lived five days longer ; but not a single soul must be privy to the matter." And when she had the servant's promise to keep it secret she said to him : "You shall go sell the horse, and to them that ask how much, you shall answer a ducat ; but I have a mighty serviceable cat which I am minded to put into the market, and you must sell it together with the horse for ninety-nine ducats, and so the cat and the horse will bring the hundred ducats that my husband would have taken for the horse alone." The servant forthwith did as he was commanded of his mistress, and as he led the horse through the market place, holding the cat under his arm, a gentleman who had afore seen the horse and desired to have it, asked the price thereof. The servant replied a ducat. The gentleman said : "Prithee do not mock me." "I do assure you," said the man, "it will cost you but a single ducat. It is true you must buy the cat along with it, of which the price is ninety-nine ducats." Straightway the gentleman, thinking it was a reasonable bargain, paid him one ducat for the horse, and ninety and nine for the cat, as it was asked of him, and bore away his commodities. The servant, on the other hand, took the money to his mistress, which she received right merrily, and failed not to give the one ducat that was the price of the horse to the poor beggars, as her husband had enjoined, and kept the ninety and nine for herself and her children.

"What think you? Was she not wiser than her husband, and was not her care for her conscience small in comparison with her care for his money?" "I think," said Parlamente, "that she loved her husband

well, but since men for the most part wander when they are near to death, she knowing his intent, interpreted his words to the profit of her children; wherefore I esteem her to have done prudently." "What!" said Geburon, "do you not esteem it a great sin to make the will of the departed of none effect?" "I do so esteem it," answered Parlamente, "being the deviser is of sound mind and not wandering." "Call you it wandering to give of one's substance to the Church and to the poor?" "By no means," said Parlamente, "when a man distributes to the poor what God hath put in his hands, but to make alms of another's goods I esteem no great wisdom. For you commonly see the worst usurers build the bravest and most admirable chapels, thinking to appease God for a hundred thousand ducats of robbery with ten thousand ducats of building, as if God could not keep account." "Truly," said Oisille, "I have often marvelled how they think to do God a pleasure with the selfsame things that he reproved when on earth, such as buildings adorned with gold and painting. But if they would attend to what God hath said in one place where he asks of us not sacrifice but a humble and contrite heart, and in another where St Paul tells us we are the temples in the which God would dwell; they would labour to adorn their souls while they are alive, and not wait for the hour when men can do nor good nor evil, laying a charge on them that remain to do alms to the poor whom, while they are alive, they deign not so much as to look upon. But He that knoweth the heart of man is not deceived, and will judge them not only for their works but also for the faith and love they have had for Him." "How comes it then," said Geburon, "that the Grey Friars

and Mendicants at our death talk of nothing but of making benefactions to their monasteries, assuring us that they will send us forthwith to paradise, whether we will or no?" "What! Geburon," said Hircan, "have you forgotten the craft of the friars that you yourself have told us of, that you ask how it is possible for them to lie? I declare to you that I deem them the greatest liars in the world, and though they that speak on behalf of the whole community are not worthy of reproof, yet there are certain of them that forget their vow of poverty to satisfy their covetousness." "Methinks, Hircan," said Nomerfide, "you know of some tale to the purpose. I pray you, if it be worthy of this company here present, to tell it." "I will do so," said Hircan, "though it wearies me to talk of these folk, for it seems to me that they are in the number of them of whom Virgil says to Dante: 'Pass on, and heed them not.'[1] Natheless, to show you that they leave not their worldly passions with their worldly habits, I will tell you how the case fell out."

## NOVEL LVI.

### *Of a Cozening Device of an Old Friar.*

It was told to a French lady in Padua that in the bishop's prison there was a friar, and seeing that all

[1] "Non ragionam di lor, ma guarda e passa."—"Purgatorio," iii. 51. These words are spoken of the melancholy souls of those who lived without virtue and without infamy, idle, useless, neither for God nor against Him, and who (cast out alike from heaven and hell) must bewail themselves for ever through a dim and blind eternity, forgotten by mercy and ignored by justice.

men made a jest of him, she asked the reason of it. And she was told that this friar, an old man, was confessor to an honourable and devout lady who for some time had been a widow, and had one only daughter whom she loved so much that her care was but to heap up riches for her and to find her a good match. And perceiving her daughter to be growing of age, she incessantly troubled herself to find her a husband who could live with them in peace and quietness ; that is to say, she would have a man with a good and honest conscience. And since she had heard a foolish preacher declare that it is better to do wrong by the counsel of the doctors of the Church than do right by the inspiration of the Holy Ghost, she addressed herself to her confessor, a man then stricken in years, a doctor in theology, esteemed of good life by all the town, assuring herself that with his counsel and prayers she would not fail to gain peace and quietness for herself and her daughter. And on her earnestly entreating him to choose a husband for her daughter, and such a man as he knew would be befitting for a maid that loved God and her conscience, he replied that first of all he must implore the grace of the Holy Ghost with prayer and fasting, and then, God confirming his understanding, he would hope to find what she wanted. So the friar went apart to ponder the matter, and hearing from the lady that she had got together five hundred ducats to give her daughter's husband, and would feed, lodge, and clothe the pair, he bethought him that there was a young friar of his acquaintance, of a good figure and pleasant countenance, to whom he would give the maid, the house, and an assured maintenance, and keep the five hundred ducats as an easement for his unspeakable

covetousness. And having spoken to the young friar he agreed with him, and returned to the lady, saying: "I steadfastly believe that God hath sent me his angel Raphael, as he did to Tobit, to find a perfect husband for your daughter, for I do assure you I have in my house the bravest gentleman in all Italy, who, having several times seen your daughter, is mightily pleased with her, and this very day, while I prayed, God sent him to me, and he declared the desire he had for this marriage; and I, knowing his house and lineage, and that he comes of a very notable stock, promised him to speak with you on the matter. It is true that one thing, and one only, is not as it should be with him; that is, that, wishing to save a friend whom another would have killed, he drew his sword for to part them; but it fell out that his friend killed the other, and so he, though he struck no blow, is fled from his town, since he was present to the murder and drew his sword. And, by the counsel of his kinsfolk, he has hidden himself in this town in the habit of a scholar, and remains here unknown till his friends have brought the matter to a conclusion, which he hopes will be no long time. Wherefore the marriage must be done secretly, and you must be content for him to go during the day to the public lecture, and sup and lie here every night." To this the good woman answered: "I deem your words, father, to be spoken greatly to my advantage, for at the least I shall have by me that I desire most of all things." Then the friar brought in his fellow, clad in a crimson satin doublet, and altogether very brave, so that as soon as he was come the betrothal was performed, and on the last stroke of midnight mass was sung and they were married. Then they went to lie

together, but at the dawn of day the bridegroom said to his wife that he must begone to the college if he would remain unknown, and, taking his doublet and his long robe, together with his coif of black silk, he bade farewell to his wife, who was still in bed, and promised to take his supper with her every evening, but she must not look for him at dinner. So he went his way and left his wife, she esteeming herself the most fortunate of women, in that she had met with such a good match. But the young married friar returned to the old father confessor, and gave him the five hundred ducats according to their agreement, and in the evening supped with her who took him for her husband, and in such wise did he obtain her love and that of his mother-in-law that they would not have changed him for the greatest prince in the world.

This manner of living endured for some time, but since God has compassion on them that are deceived through no fault of their own, He put it into the hearts of the mother and daughter to go to hear mass at the Grey Friars' Church of St Francis, where likewise they would see their good confessor who had provided the one with so dutiful a son-in-law, and the other with so brave a husband. And it chanced that, not being able to find the confessor, or any other of their acquaintance, they were pleased to wait his coming, and in the meanwhile to hear high mass, which was then beginning. And as the daughter gazed with attentive eyes on the holy mysteries being performed at the altar, when the priest turned him to the people to say the *Dominus vobiscum*, she was struck with a great astonishment, for it seemed to her that the priest was either her husband or the express image of him. But she said not a word, and

waited till he should turn a second time, looking upon him more carefully, and doubted not that he was the man. Wherefore she touched her mother, who was in a devout contemplation of the mysteries, and said to her: "Alas! alas! mother, who is that I see?" Her mother asked her who it was. "'Tis my husband that is now singing mass, or the one man in the world who is altogether like to him." Her mother, who had not carefully looked upon him, said: "I entreat you, daughter, let no such imaginations enter your brain, for 'tis a thing plainly impossible that these holy men should devise such a cozening device, and you will sin grievously against God if you put faith in this fantasy." Natheless the mother did not omit to look upon him, and when he turned him at the *Ite missa est* she clearly perceived that never were twin brothers more like to one another than this priest to her son-in-law. Yet so simple was she that she would fain have said: "Save me, O God, from believing mine own eyes!" But since it touched her daughter she would not leave the matter thus in darkness, and resolved to know the truth of it. And when the time was come in the evening for the husband to return, the mother said to her daughter: "Now, if you are willing, we can know the truth concerning your husband, for as soon as he is bedded I will come in, and do you snatch off his coif from behind so that he perceive you not, and we shall see if he has a tonsure like him who sang mass." As it was resolved, so it was done, for when that evil husband was in bed the old dame came in, and while she took him by the hands, as if in jest, her daughter snatched off his coif and left him with his fine tonsure, whereat the two women were mightily astounded. But forthwith they

called the servants that were in the house, and made them take him and keep him fast in bonds till the morning, and no excuse or talking at all availed him. And on the morrow the lady sent for her confessor, feigning to have some great secret for his ear, so he came in great haste, and she made take him like the young friar, reproaching him with the deceit he had used toward her. And after this they were haled before the judges, and these, if they were honest folk, would by no means let them escape unpunished.

"By this, ladies, you perceive that they who are vowed to poverty are not freed from the temptation of covetousness, which is the cause of many evils." "Nay, but rather many blessings," said Saffredent, "for the monk made good cheer on the five hundred ducats the old woman would have stored up, and the poor maid, who was in such earnest expectation of a husband, was enabled thereby to have two if she had a mind, and knew better how to speak the truth of all hierarchies." "Your positions," said Oisille, "are always of the falsest, for you think that every woman is of the same complexion as yourself." "With your good favour, mistress," said Saffredent, "I maintain no such thing, for I would that women were as easy to satisfy as we are." "That was an evil speech," said Oisille, "for there is not one present that knoweth not to the contrary. And to prove the truth thereof, doth not the story that was but now told show the simpleness of poor womenfolk, and the craft of those we consider far better than other men; for neither mother nor daughter wished to do according to their own will, but submitted themselves unto ghostly counsel." "And some women," said Longarine, "are so hard to please that they think they

ought to have angels for husbands." "For which cause," said Simontault, "they often light upon devils; and chiefly they that, putting no trust in God, deem by their own good sense, or that of another, to find that happiness in this world which is given alone of God." "What! Simontault," said Oisille, "I knew not there was so much of good in you." "Mistress," answered Simontault, "'tis pity I have had no trial, for by reason of your not knowing me, you have already passed a bad judgment on me; but since a friar hath intromitted with my craft, why should not I practise the craft of a friar?" "This, then, you call your craft," said Parlamente, "to deceive women? Out of your own mouth you are condemned." "When I shall have deceived a hundred thousand," said Simontault, "even then I shall not be avenged for the torments that one hath made to suffer." "I know," answered Parlamente, "how often you make complaint of the ladies, and all the while we see you so stout and joyous that it is not to be believed that you have suffered all the ills you say. But as *La Belle Dame Sans Merci* replies, *you do well to talk thus since you draw some comfort from it.*" "You bring in a notable doctor, Alain Chartier," said Simontault, "who not only is wearisome himself, but makes all who read him and follow his teaching wearisome likewise." "Yet," replied Parlamente, "his teaching is as profitable to maids as any I know of." "If it were thus," said Simontault, "and the ladies were without compassion, we could give our horses a rest, and let our armour rust till next war, and think of nought else but the household. And, prithee, tell me whether it is a brave thing for a lady to have the name of being without pity, without charity, without

love, and without compassion?" "Let her not be," answered Parlamente, "without charity and love; but this word *compassion* hath such an ill sound in a woman's ears, that we cannot use it without doing a hurt to our honour; for compassion is to grant some favour which is asked, and we know what favour a man would ask." "With your good pleasure, mistress," said Simontault, "some there be so reasonable that they ask but a word." "You make me to remember," said Parlamente, "him who was content with a glove." "We must know," said Hircan, "who was this easy lover, wherefore I give you my vote." "And I will willingly tell the tale," said Parlamente, "for it is full of honourable passages."

## NOVEL LVII.

*The great delectation taken by an English lord in a very small matter.*

It chanced that King Lewis the Eleventh[1] sent my lord de Montmorency into England as his ambassador, who was so welcomed that the King and all the lords loved and esteemed him exceedingly, and did so much as tell him their secret occasions that they might have his advice thereon. One day, as he sat at a feast the King made for him, he had by him at the board a lord of a great house, who had a small lady's glove fixed on to his doublet by golden hooks, and where the fingers joined it was so adorned with diamonds, rubies, ame-

[1] Perhaps this mention of Louis XI. is another disguise. The first Montmorency whom we can ascertain to have been sent on an embassy to England was François de Montmorency, Seigneur de la Rochepot, who went there in 1446. This must be about the very time that Margaret composed the Sixth Day of the "Heptameron."

thysts, and pearls, that it was assuredly a glove of great price. My lord de Montmorency looked at it so often that he who wore it perceived he would fain ask wherefore it was so magnificent, and esteeming that the tale would be altogether to his advantage he began: "I plainly perceive that you find it a strange thing for me to have thus gorgeously arrayed a poor glove, and I still more desire to tell you the reason, for I esteem you for an honest gentleman and one who knows what manner of passion is love, and if I have done well therein you shall praise me for it, and if not, you will make excuse for me, inasmuch as the same love bears rule in every honourable heart. Know then that all my life I have loved one lady, whom I love now, and shall love after her death. But though my heart was so bold as to address itself in a high quarter, yet my tongue could not take courage to speak, and for seven years I tarried without a sign, fearing lest, if she was ware of it, I should lose the means I had of often seeing her, the which I feared more than death. But one day, as we were in a meadow, while I looked upon her, so violently did my heart beat, that I lost all colour and the manner of my countenance was changed. And she perceiving this, and asking what ailed me, I answered that it was a heartache hardly to be borne, and she, thinking it was a sickness in which love had no share, showed pity on me. Wherefore I entreated her to put her hand upon my heart to see how grievously it was beating, and this she did, but more out of kindness than love, and as I held her hand upon my heart, it fell to beating in such wise, that she perceived I had spoken nought but the truth. And then holding her hand upon my breast I said to her: 'Alas! mistress, take this poor

heart of mine, that would fain break through my breast and lie in the hand of you from whom I crave favour, and life, and pity; wherefore I must now tell you of the love I have so long concealed, since neither I nor my heart can overcome this almighty deity.' And when she heard this discourse of mine, finding it mighty strange, she would have drawn back her hand, but I kept it so that this glove was left to me in the place of her cruel hand. And since I have never since had any intercourse with her, I have fixed the glove upon my heart as the best emplaster for it, and have adorned it with all my fairest jewels, though I hold the glove itself as more excellent a thing than this whole realm of England, nor do I esteem any of the world's goods equal to having it upon my breast." My lord de Montmorency, who would have rather had the hand than the glove of a lady, extolled him for his honourable dealing, saying he was the most perfect lover he had ever seen and worthy of kinder treatment, since of so small a thing he had made so much. Though perchance, if he had more than the glove, he would die from mere excess of pleasure. To all this the English lord agreed, not perceiving that the other was making a mock of him.

"If all men were thus honourable, the ladies might well trust them, since the cost would be but a glove." "I was of the acquaintance of my lord de Montmorency," said Geburon, "and I am sure he would not have desired to love after the fashion of this Englishman; for had he contented himself with so little he would not have had his notable successes in love affairs, as the old song says: 'Faint heart ne'er won fair lady.'" "Trust me," said Saffre-

dent, "the poor lady drew back her hand pretty speedily when she felt how the heart of him was beating; for she thought he might die, and they say there is nothing more hateful to a woman than to touch a dead man." "If you had resorted to the hospitals as much as to the taverns," said Ennasuitte, "you would not talk after this sort, for you would there see women making the dead ready for burial, when men, brave as they may be, dare not touch them." "It is true," said Saffredent, "that any woman, when a penance is laid upon her, will do that most contrary to her inclinations, as was apparent in a lady of a good house who was found at four of the clock one morning kissing the dead body of a gentleman who had been killed the day before, and with whom she had not been at all particular. And this was done by way of satisfaction for past delights, and the pleasure she had taken to kiss a man she loved." "Since every good work done of a woman," said Oisille, "is taken in bad part by man, I am of opinion that, dead or living, there should be no kissing if it be not in accordance with the commandment of God." "As for me," said Hircan, "I care so little for kissing women, save only my wife, that I will agree to whatsoever may be ordained in the matter; but I pity the young folk from whom you would take away this small contentment, thereby making the commandment of St Paul, who will have us kiss *in osculo sancto*, of none effect." "If St Paul had been like unto you," said Nomerfide, "we should have required most evident signs of the Spirit of God speaking in him." "To the last," said Geburon, "you will rather doubt Holy Writ than forsake one of your petty observances." "May God guard us," said Oisille, "from doubting Holy Writ,

so long as we put small trust in your lies; for there is no woman who knows not what her belief should be, namely to have no doubt in the word of God, and no faith in the word of man." "Yet do I believe," said Simontault, "that there are more men deceived of women than women deceived of men. For they loving us but a little, put no trust in the truth we tell them; whilst we, loving them greatly, believe their lies in such sort that we are deceived before we suspect that it is possible." "I hold it great foolishness," said Nomerfide, "for wives to be curiously inquisitive as to their husbands, and in like manner husbands as to their wives. For sufficient for the day is the evil thereof, without need to take thought for the morrow." "Yet," said Oisille, "it is sometimes needful to inquire on matters that touch the honour of the house, but this only that order may be taken therewith, and not for the ill-judging of persons, since there is none without fault." "Many an one," said Geburon, "hath fallen into mischance, for want of a curious inquiry into his wife's fault." "I pray you," said Longarine, "if you know of an example thereof, hide it not from us." "One is well known to me," answered Geburon, "and since it is your pleasure I will tell it."

## NOVEL LX.

*How a man, for putting too great trust in his wife, fell into much misery.*

In the town of Paris there lived so good-natured a man, that he would have thought it a sin to believe in the frailty of his wife, though he had seen it with his eyes. And he was married to a very wicked woman,

whose wickedness he never perceived, but treated her as if she were as good as any in the world. But one day, when King Lewis the Twelfth was in Paris, his wife left him for one of the choir-men of the aforesaid prince; and when the King went away and she could see her lover no more, she determined to forsake her husband and follow him. To this the songman agreed, and took her to a house he had at Blois, where they lived a long while together. The poor husband, finding his wife to have wandered away, sought for her on every side, and at last it was told him that she was with the songman; and willing to recover his lost sheep, that he had so badly guarded, he wrote her many letters, praying her to return, and saying he would take her back again if she would from henceforth live virtuously. But his wife, who had such delight in the singing of her songman that she had forgotten her husband's voice, made no account of all his kindness, but mocked him; wherefore he grew angry and let her know that he would get her by the laws ecclesiastical, since in no other way she would return to him. And she, fearing lest if the law should deliver her into his hands, she and her songman would fare badly, devised a plot well worthy of her. And, dissembling sickness, she sent to certain honourable women of the town asking them to visit her, and this they did gladly, hoping through sickness to draw her from her wicked life, and to this intent each one did make unto her most seemly remonstrances. Then she, feigning to be grievously sick, wept and bewailed her sins in such sort that all present had compassion on her, steadfastly believing that she spoke from the bottom of her heart. And seeing her thus redeemed and repentant, they set them to console her, saying that

God was not so terrible as the preachers for the most part declared, and that he would never refuse His pity. Thereupon they sent for a good and discreet man to hear her confession; and on the morrow came the parson to administer the Holy Sacrament, the which she received so devoutly that all the honourable women of the town who were present wept to see her, praising God that of His goodness He had pity on this poor soul. Afterwards, feigning she could eat no more, the parson gave her extreme unction, which she received with pious signs, since scarcely now could she speak; for such was her pretence. So she remained a long time, seeming little by little to lose sight, and hearing, and all the other senses, whereat all present fell to crying aloud *Jesus!* And since night was near at hand, and the ladies lived afar off, they all left her, and while they were going from the house it was told them she was gone, and saying a *De Profundis* for her, they returned each one to her own house. The parson inquired of the songman where he would that she should be buried, who answered that she had charged him to bury her in the cemetery, whither it would be good to carry her at night. So the poor wretch was made ready for burial by a servant that took care to do her no hurt, and then with brave torches she was borne to the grave the songman had made. But when the corpse passed before the houses of those women who had been present at the giving of extreme unction, they all came out and followed her to the grave, and soon both priests and women left her with the songman, who, so soon as he saw the company at some little distance, together with the servant took out of the grave his sweetheart more alive than ever, and brought her

privily to his house, where he kept her a long while in hiding.

Her husband, who pursued after her, came to Blois and craved justice, and there he found that she was dead and buried in the estimation of all the ladies of the town, who told him the manner of her end. At this the honest man was very glad ; that her soul was in paradise, and he was quit of her wicked body. In this contentment he went back to Paris, where he took to wife a young and pretty woman of good repute and a notable housewife, of whom he had several children ; and they lived together for fourteen years and upwards ; but at last Fame, that can keep nothing hid, advertised him his wife was not dead, but alive and with the wicked songman. And the poor man concealed this so long as he was able, dissembling that he knew of it, and desiring to believe it was a lie. But the affair was told to his wife, a discreet woman, and she was so anguished thereat, that she was like to die of grief; and had it been possible for her, with a safe conscience, to hide this mischance, she would willingly have done it, but it was not so, for the bishop's court presently took order with them, and in the first place put them asunder till the whole truth should be known. So was this poor man constrained to eschew the good and ensue the evil, and came to Blois, a little after the coronation of King Francis the First, in the spring of 1515. And there he found Queen Claude and the Regent, before whom he made his plaint, asking her that he would fain have not received ; but needs must he take her, wherefore he was mightily pitied of all the company. And when his wife was brought before him, for a long time she stiffly maintained she was not his wife, the which he would

have gladly believed if he could. She, more sad than sorry or ashamed, told him she had rather die than return to him, and this was good news for her poor husband. But the ladies, before whom she made her wicked pleadings, condemned her to return, and used such threats with the songman, that he was forced to tell his mistress, and indeed she was an ugly woman enough, to go back to her husband, since he would have no more commerce with her. So, since she was obliged, the poor wretch returned to her husband, and was more kindly entreated of him than she had deserved.

"Wherefore I say, ladies, that if this poor man had been more watchful of his wife, he had not lost her, for well-kept is hardly lost, and the occasion makes the thief." "'Tis a strange thing," said Hircan, "how strong is love when it appears least bottomed on reason." "It hath been told me," said Simontault, "that it were easier to break two marriages, than to sow enmity between a priest and his wench." "I do believe it," said Ennasuitte, "for they that bind others in wedlock, know so well how to tie the knot, that only death can loosen it. Furthermore the doctors maintain spiritual discourse to be above all other, when it follows that spiritual love is the greatest of all." "This thing," said Dagoucin, "I cannot pardon in a lady, to leave a good husband or a sweetheart for a parson, be he never so comely a man." "Prithee, Dagoucin," said Hircan, "intermeddle not with our holy mother the Church, but believe that it is a great delight for poor secret fearful women to sin with men who can absolve them, for there are some who are more ashamed to confess their sins than to commit them." "You speak," said Oisille, "of them that have no knowledge of God, and who do not bethink

them that what is done in secret shall one day be made manifest before the heavenly host. But I do not believe that, for the sake of confession, they intromit with confessors, but rather that they are so blinded of the devil that they have more care for secrecy and a virtuous cloak than for absolution of sins of which they do not repent." "Repent, say you," answered Saffredent, "nay, but they esteem themselves holier than other women, and I am sure that some take honour for that they are constant to their lovers." "You speak in such sort," said Oisille to Saffredent, "that methinks you know of some story to the purpose. Wherefore I pray you on the morrow, to begin the day, you will tell us what you know. But I hear the last bell ringing for evensong, since the monks went when they had heard our tenth story, and left us to bring our dispute to a close." Thereupon the company arose, and came to the church, where they found the monks waiting for them. And when they had heard evensong, they took supper together, telling many a pleasant tale. Then after supper and their accustomed entertainment in the meadow they went to rest, so as to have the clearer brains for the morrow.

# DAY THE SEVENTH.

ON THE SEVENTH DAY RELATION IS MADE OF THEM THAT HAVE DONE WHAT THEY LEAST DESIRED.

## PROLOGUE.

On the morrow Mistress Oisille failed not to administer to them their wholesome refection, reading from St Luke concerning the acts and deeds of the glorious knights and apostles of Jesus Christ. And she told them that this relation should suffice to make them desire to see such a time, and to bring tears for this degenerate age. And when she had read and sufficiently expounded the beginning of this holy Gospel, she entreated them to go to the church, where they should unite their prayers as did the apostles, asking of God his grace, which was never refused to them that craved it faithfully. And as they came into the church the mass of the Holy Ghost was beginning, and this seeming much to the purpose, they heard the service with great devotion. Afterwards they went to dinner, calling again to mind the life apostolical, and took such pleasure therein that their tales were well-nigh forgotten. This Nomerfide, who was the youngest, perceived, and said to them : "Mistress Oisille hath so filled us with devotion that we let the time go by, in the which we are wont to go apart, to make us ready for the telling of our novels." These words made all the company to arise,

and after they had stayed some while in their rooms they went forth into the meadow as they had done on the precedent day, and when they were seated at their ease Oisille said to Saffredent: "Though I be assured that you will say nothing to the advantage of women, yet I must require you to tell the novel that yesterday evening was in your mouth." "I except, mistress," answered Saffredent, "to acquiring the fame of an evil speaker for telling the truth; nor should I lose the favour of such ladies as are virtuous for recounting the deeds of wantons, for I know what it is to lack the sight of them, and if I was put out of their favour also I could no longer live." So saying he turned his eyes towards her who was the occasion of his weal and woe; but chancing to look on Ennasuitte, he made her to blush, all as if she had been the one to whom his discourse was addressed, yet none the less was it understood of her to whom it was spoken. And Oisille assured him he could tell the truth freely, let who would bear the blame. Then began Saffredent, and said:

## NOVEL LXI.

*Of the shamefulness and impudency of a certain woman who forsook her husband's house to live with a canon.*

Hard-by the town of Autun there dwelt a lady, tall, fair, and of as goodly a feature as I have ever seen. And she was wed to an honest gentleman somewhat younger than herself, who loved and entreated her so well that she had good reason to be satisfied with him. Some space of time after they were married he brought her with him to Autun where he had some business,

and while he pleaded in the court his wife went to church to pray to God for him. And she resorted so much to this holy place that a rich canon grew in love with her, and paid his suit to such purpose that the poor wretch submitted to him, of which her husband had no suspicion, taking more thought for his substance than for his wife. But when she must needs depart thence and return to her home, seven long leagues from Autun, she grieved sore, though the canon promised he would often come and see her. This he did, feigning to go on a journey, and the road always led past the gentleman's house, and he, not being altogether foolish, perceived his intent, and took such order that when the canon came there he found the wife no more, for the husband made her to bestow herself so secretly that there could be no parley between them. She, not ignorant of her husband's jealousy, gave no sign that it was displeasing to her, natheless she resolved to effect something, for to lose the sight of her divinity seemed to her as hell. So one day, on the which her husband was away from the house, she so dealt with the servants that she was left alone; and forthwith taking what was needful, and with no fellow save her brainsick rapture, she fared forth on foot to Autun. There she arrived not too late to be recognised of her canon, who kept her privily in his house for better than a year,[1] for all the excommunications and citations procured by her

[1] This canon, as the seducer of a married woman, is rightly represented here under an odious light. The odium, however, consisted rather in her adultery than in his priesthood. I quote from Canon Creighton a brief sentence explanatory of the state of the church in France at this time. "In the regulations of the Concordat (between Francis I. and Leo X.), we are surprised by an enactment, which the existing state of the church rendered necessary. Bishops were ordered to proceed against clergy

husband; and he, having no other remedy, made complaint to the bishop, who had as good an archdeacon as there ever was in France. And such diligent search did he make for her through all the canon's houses that he found her that was lost and clapped her into prison, condemning the canon to a sharp penance. The husband, being advised that by means of the good archdeacon and several other honest folk she was recovered, was content to take her back on her oath that from henceforth she would live virtuously, which the good man easily believed, for he loved her greatly. And being received again into his house, she was entreated as honourably as afore, save that her husband gave her two ancient bedchamber women, one of whom

living in open concubinage; they were to be punished by a suspension for three months, and, if they did not then put away their concubine, by deprivation of their benefice. Bishops were enjoined in the most solemn words to accept no composition for conniving at this irregularity. The celibacy of the clergy was in such danger of breaking down that it had to be asserted however incongruously." ("Hist. of the Papacy," vol. iv.) It was all very well to solemnly adjure the bishops; but in France the celibacy of the clergy was, not as in Italy, a recognized sin, but a disregarded conventionality. Nothing could be less like the position of any Roman Cardinal's Giulia or Vannozza, than the social status of (for example) the prudent and virtuous Mme. de Châtillon, who was commonly reported to be the wife of Cardinal Jean du Bellay. She was considered as respectable as any English bishop's lady. No doubt the political sympathy of France for England in the affair of the divorce of Henry VIII., added its quota to the growing infiltration of Protestant ideas through the Catholic priesthood of France. We know that, so late as the Council of Trent, it was still hoped to reconcile the Huguenots with Rome by the admission of the laity to the communion in two kinds, and the grant of the right of marriage to the priesthood. This plan which seemed good to Catholics so eminent as the Emperor Ferdinand and Queen Catherine de Medici, was supported by the great body of the French bishops. But, for good or evil, Spain carried the day at the Tridentine Council, and Catholicism entered there upon its ultramontane phase.

was always with her. But however kindly he might use her, the wicked love she had for the canon made her deem all rest as torment; and though she was a mighty pretty woman, and he a strong burly man, of a sanguine complexion, yet they had no children, for her heart was ever seven long leagues from her body. Yet this she dissembled so well that her husband conceived that all that was past was forgotten of her as it was forgiven of him. But when she saw that her husband loved her as greatly as ever, and had no suspicions, she craftily feigned to fall sick, and so persisted in her cozenage that he was exceeding afraid, sparing nothing to succour her. Natheless she played her part so well, that he and all his house thought that she was sick unto death, and growing by slow degrees weaker and weaker; and she, seeing him to be as sorry as he should have been glad, prayed him to give her authority to make her will, and this he willingly did, weeping the while. And having power to devise, though she had no children, she gave to her husband all that she was able, asking his pardon for her offences against him; then the parson being come she confessed and received the holy Sacrament of the altar with such devotion that all wept to see so glorious an end. And when it was evening she prayed her husband to send for extreme unction, since she grew so feeble that she scarce hoped to take it alive; so he sent with all haste for the parson, and she, by her great humility in the reception of it, made all present to praise her. So, having discharged these holy mysteries, she said to her husband, that God having given her grace to receive all the rites of Holy Church, she was so quieted in her mind that she would fain rest awhile, and prayed her husband to do the like,

and indeed with all his weeping and watchings he stood in sore need thereof. And when her husband and all his people with him were gone out, the two old women who had guarded her so long in health, not fearing now to lose her, save by death, went to sleep at their ease. And so soon as she heard them snoring, she arose in her shift and went out of the room, listening whether any one in the house was stirring; and having her loins girded and her staff in her hand, she sallied forth by a little garden gate that was not shut, and while it was night, in her shift alone and with bare feet, she made her pilgrimage to the saint at Autun, who could raise her from death to life. But since it was a long journey she could not accomplish the whole space of it before the day began to dawn. Then looking all along the road she saw two horsemen riding furiously, and, thinking it was her husband who sought her out, she hid her body in a marshy place, with her head amidst the rushes, and as her husband chased by he said to his servant, in a manner of despair: "Alas! the wicked woman! Who would have thought that, under the holy sacraments of the Church, she would have concealed so foul and abominable a deceit!" The servant replied: "Since Judas, who received the same bread as she, feared not to betray his Master, do not esteem it a strange thing for a woman to do the like." Then her husband passed on; and his wife tarried amidst the rushes, more glad to have deceived him than when she esteemed herself as a slave in her good bed at home. The poor husband made search through all the town of Autun, but he perceived that of a certainty she was not entered therein, wherefore he went back making great complaint of her and his loss, and threatening her with nothing less than

death if he found her. But of this she had no fear in her mind, no more than she had of the cold in her body, though the place and the season should have sufficed to make her repent of this her damnable pilgrimage. And if we knew not how the fire of hell burns up them that are filled with it, we should justly find it a marvellous thing that this wretched woman, coming out of a warm bed, was able to stay a whole day in the bitter cold. Yet she lost not heart for the journey, but so soon as it was night fared forth again upon her way; and when they were about to shut the gates of Autun this pilgrim arrived there, and went straight to the shrine of her saint, who scarcely was able to believe that it was she, so astonished was he at the sight of her. But when he had assured himself that she was no phantom, from henceforth they were in such good accord that they lived together fourteen or fifteen years. And though for some time she abode with him privily, at last she lost all fear, and worse than this, gloried to have such a sweetheart, so that she set herself in church higher than most of the honest women in the town, the wives of officers and other folk. And by the canon she had children, notably a daughter who was married to a rich merchant, and after so magnificent a sort that all the women in the town murmured at it, but had not authority to take any order in the matter. Now it came to pass that at this time Queen Claude, wife of Francis the First, passed through Autun, having in her following the Regent,[1] mother to the King, and also her daughter

[1] This fixes the date for the year 1524, when Queen Claude was dying, Francis before Pavia, and Louise Regent of France. Margaret had no great love for Claude, whom she describes in the fourth novel of the "Heptameron" as a dull, peevish, and tiresome woman. Claude, with

the Duchess of Alençon. And the Queen had a servant, named Perrette, who came to the aforesaid Duchess, and said to her: "Mistress, hear me, I entreat you, for so you will do better than to go to the service at the church." The Duchess willingly gave ear to her, knowing she would not say aught that was not good, so Perrette forthwith told her how she had taken to her a little girl to help in the washing of the Queen's linen; and on asking her the news of the town, she spoke as touching the grief of the honest women to see the canon's mistress thus going before them, and made some relation of the woman's life. And the Duchess went presently to the Queen and the Regent, and recounted to them this history, and they, without any form of law, cited this poor wretch before them, who by no means hid herself away. For her former shame was changed into boasting that she kept the house of so rich a man, and no whit afraid or shamefaced, she came into the presence of the aforesaid ladies, who marvelled at this impudency, so that at first they knew not what to say. But afterwards the Regent remonstrated with her in such sort as should have made a woman of any understanding weep. But she did none of this, and with unspeakable audacity answered them: "I pray you, ladies, touch not mine honour, for, praised be God, I have lived with the canon so honestly and virtuously that no living soul can cast anything in my teeth. And let no one think that I do anything against the will of God, since for these three years past we have dwelt together as chastely and lovingly as two little angels,

her pure straight profile, neat hair, and shrunk, consumptive shoulders, is a pathetic little figure in that brilliant Court. She had little influence or authority. Her mother-in-law ruled her with harsh severity.

and never a thought nor a word betwixt us to the contrary. And whosoever shall sunder us will commit a great sin, insomuch as the good man, who is hard on his eightieth year, cannot live without me, who am but forty-five." You cannot conceive what fashion of discourse the ladies used with her, and the remonstrances which they made; but for all that her heart was not softened by their words, nor by her own years, nor for the company she was in. And to humiliate her the more they sent for the good archdeacon of Autun, who condemned her to a year's imprisonment on bread and water. Then the ladies sent for her husband, who, by reason of their exhortations, was content to take her back, after that she had performed her penances. But being a prisoner, and advised that the canon was resolved to be altogether quit of her, she thanked the ladies for that they had thrown the devil from her back, and repented her so heartily, that her husband, in place of waiting for a year, came and asked her of the archdeacon in a fortnight, and they lived in perfect peace and contentment ever after.

"Behold, ladies, how the chains of St Peter are by evil ministers converted to the chains of the devil, and so hardly are they to be broken that the sacraments, which make Satan to flee away, are the means whereby he dwells the longer in their bodies. For the best is that which, when it suffers corruption, becomes the worst." "Truly," said Oisille, "the woman was a wretch, but she was sufficiently punished by coming before such judges as the ladies you have named, since the very look of the Regent was so virtuous, that an honest woman deemed herself unworthy to stand before her eyes, and was afraid. She on whom her regard was

kind took great praise to herself, knowing that this lady looked on wanton women with but small favour." "This would be goodly work," said Hircan, "that one should have more fear for the eyes of a woman than for the Holy Sacrament, that if it be not received in faith and charity, is for everlasting damnation." "I promise you," answered Parlamente, "that they who have not God in their hearts are more afraid of the powers temporal than spiritual. And I suppose that this poor soul cleansed her ways more for her imprisonment and the loss of the canon than for any remonstrances that were made to her." "Yet you have forgotten," said Simontault, "the efficient cause that made her return to her husband. And this was that the canon was eighty and her husband younger than she, so this good dame came off best in all her battles; but if the canon had been a young man, she would not have forsaken him. Nor would the reproaches of the ladies have been of more avail than the sacraments she had received." "Yet," said Nomerfide, "she did well, methinks, not to confess her sin too easily, for such offences should be told with all humility to God, and stiffly denied before men; since, though the accusation be a true one, by force of lying and swearing, some doubt may be engendered in the minds of the judges." "Natheless," said Longarine, "a sin cannot be done so secretly that it shall not be revealed, if God do not hide it in them that for love of Him truly repent thereof." "As for perfect constancy," said Hircan, "I maintain 'tis an admirable and miraculous chastity." "There is nought of the miracle in it," said Oisille, "for when the heart is entirely addicted, all things are possible to the body." "Ay," said Hircan, "to bodies that have taken

upon them the angelical nature." Oisille replied: "I would not speak of those alone, that by God's grace are all transformed into Him, but of these on this earth who are still within the fleshly tabernacle. And if you make search you shall find that men who have set their hearts and affections on gaining a perfect knowledge of the sciences, have not only forgotten the lust of the flesh, but also such things as are needful, I would say eating and drinking; hence comes it that they who love comely and virtuous women are so content to behold them and hear them speak, and have their spirits so at rest, that the flesh is voided of all desire. And they who know not such contentment are the carnal, shut up within their own fatness, and ignorant whether they have a soul or no. But when the flesh is subject unto the spirit, a man has no thought for the imperfections of the body, and is, as it were, insensible to them. And I knew a gentleman who, to show that he loved his mistress more than any of his fellows, made proof of the same by holding his fingers in the flame of a candle, and, steadfastly looking upon the lady, remained so firm that he was burnt to the bone, and persisted that he had felt no pain." "Methinks," said Geburon, "that the devil, whose martyr he was, should have made a St Lawrence the Less out of him; for there are few so consumed by the flame of love that they fear not that of the smallest taper, and if a lady had made me to endure so much for the sake of her, I should have asked a great reward, or put her altogether out of my brain." "You would then," said Parlamente, "have your hour after the lady had had hers; like a certain gentleman of Valencia, in Spain, whose story was told me by an honest captain." "I pray you," answered Dagoucin, "take my place and

recount the tale to us, for I am assured it will be a pleasant one." "By this history, ladies," said Parlamente, "you will learn to think twice before you refuse a man, and not to trust that the present time will remain ever as it is, and so, knowing that it is subject to mutation, you will take thought for the future."

## NOVEL LXIV.

*A lady delaying to wed her lover, drove him into such inward discontent that he turned friar, and would have no more commerce with her.*

In the city of Valencia there lived a gentleman who, for the space of five or six years, had so loved a lady that neither the honour nor the conscience of the one nor the other was wounded; for his intent was to take her to wife, and he could well do so inasmuch as he was comely, rich, and of a good house. And when he declared his love to her he also told her he was minded to agree with her as touching their marriage, and to have the counsel of her kinsfolk on it. And they, being gathered together to this end, found the marriage a very reasonable one, provided that the girl was well inclined to it; but she, either thinking to make a better match, or willing to dissemble her love for him, raised some difficulties, so that the company departed, not without regret, that she had not been able to come to a conclusion, for they knew the parties were in every way well suited. But the gentleman sorrowed most of all, for he could have borne the mishap patiently if he had thought that it was the fault of the kinsfolk and not of herself; but knowing the truth, that was worse to him

than death, without a word to his sweetheart or any other he betook him to his house. And after that he had taken order with his affairs he went to a solitary place, where he laboured to forget this love, and turned it all to love of Our Lord, whose due it was. And during this time he had no tidings of the lady nor her kin, wherefore he was resolved, since he had failed to gain the happiest life he could hope for, to take to himself the most austere and offensive that could be imagined. And with this mournful thought, that was fit to be called despair, he became a monk in a religious house of St. Francis, not far from the dwellings of several of his kinsmen, who, knowing his intent, did all that was in their power to obstruct the same, but it was so stiffly rooted in his heart that no endeavour could turn him from it. Yet, knowing the cause of his sickness, they thought to find the medicine for it, and came to her who was the reason of his sudden devotion. She, mightily astonished and vexed at this mischance, having intended by her refusal only to make trial of his good will and not to lose it for ever, of which latter she was plainly in danger, sent him an epistle, the which, poorly translated, is somewhat as follows :—

"Since love, if 'tis not proved to be
Steadfast and full of loyalty,
Is nothing worth ; I did desire
To purge thee with assaying fire,
And win a love that should endure
In constancy, abiding sure
Throughout our lives. And thus I say
I raised some causes of delay,
Before the binding of that chain
That lasteth while life doth remain.

"And now, dear sweetheart, thou that wast my all
Art passed into the life monastical;
Whereat I sorrow so that I must speak,
And by these words the woeful silence break.
Come, then, dear love, in whom I have my breath,
And losing whom I do but long for death;
Oh, turn thine eyes to me, and come away
From cloisteral paths; leave cord, and cowl, and grey;
And broken slumbers and austerity,
So shall thy heart have that felicity
Ofttimes desired. For now it is no less
Than 'twas before, and I myself address
To keep for thee alone this happiness.
Oh, then return, and thy true sweetheart wed,
That we may lie in one devoted bed,
And call to our remembrance yet once more
The love delight we two enjoyed afore.
For this was my desire, I would but try
To make more sure thy faith and constancy;
And since these and thy love are plainly shown,
Come back, dear love, and make me all thine own."

This letter, carried by a friend of hers, who made all the remonstrances that were in his power, was received and read of the gentleman friar with so sad a countenance and with such sighs and tears, that it seemed as if he would burn and drown the poor epistle. And to it he made no reply, but only said to the messenger that the mortification of his passion had cost him so dear that he had lost all desire of life and fear of death. Wherefore he required her who was the cause of it, since she had not been minded to appease his great love and desire, no more to torment him, but to be content with the evil she had done, for which there was no remedy but to seek out so harsh a life that by continual penance he might forget his grief. And he trusted, through fasts and disciplines, so to weaken his body that the expec-

tation of death should be to him his sovereign comfort, but above all would have no tidings of her, since the mere thought of her name was purgatory to him. The gentleman returned with this sad reply and bore it to the lady, who grieved sorely at the hearing of it. But love, that will hope unto the last, made her conceive that if she could visit him, sight and speech would avail more than writing, so with her father and those near akin to her she went to the monastery where he was, having neglected nothing that might increase her beauty. For she thought that if he did but once see her and hear her voice, the fire of love that had so long dwelt in his heart would surely be rekindled and burn more ardently than before. So coming into the monastery towards the close of evensong, she sent for him to a chapel by the cloisters, and he, who knew not who desired to see him, went forth to the fiercest fight he had ever been in. And when she saw him thus sallow and lean-looking that he was scarcely to be known, but nevertheless full of no less admirable a grace than afore, love made her stretch forth her arms to embrace him, and pity for the estate he was in so enfeebled her heart that she fell to the ground in a swoon. But the poor monk, who had in him some share of brotherly love, raised her up and set her on a seat in the chapel. And though he stood as much in need of help himself, he feigned to be ignorant of her passion, fortifying his heart with the love of God against the occasions present to him, in such wise that by his face he might be judged not to perceive what was being done under his eyes. And when she was recovered from her swoon, turning those glorious and pitiful eyes upon him with such an aspect as would have softened a rock, she did all she was able to persuade

him to come out from the place where he was. To this he replied very soberly and virtuously; but at last the heart of the poor monk was so melted by her tears, that he saw Love, the cruel bowman, whose sorrows he had so long borne, holding his gilded arrow ready for the giving a new and a more deadly wound; and so fled from before Love and his sweetheart as one whose surety was only in flight. And when he was shut up in his cell, not willing to let her go without clearly resolving her, he wrote a few words in the Spanish tongue, which seem to me so goodly in the matter, that, lest I diminish at all the beauty of them, I will leave them untranslated. This message he sent her by a little novice, who found her still in the chapel, and so despairing that if it had been lawful she also would have turned friar. But when she saw the manner of the writing: *Volvete don venesti, anima mia, que en las tristas vidas es la mia*,[1] she knew that all hope was lost, and determined to follow the counsel of him and her friends, and going home to lead a life as melancholic as that of her lover was austere.

"You see, ladies, how the gentleman avenged him on his cruel sweetheart, who, thinking to make trial of him, drove him to such despair that when she would have taken him back she could not." "I am sorry," said Nomerfide, "that he would not leave his habit to be betrothed to her, for I think it would have been a perfect marriage." "In good faith," said Simontault, "I account him very wise, for whosoever hath well considered the estate of marriage will find no less trouble in it than in the austerity of a monastical life." "In sooth," said Ennasuitte, "there be many that, upon thinking they

[1] Return whence thou camest, O my soul, for amidst the sad lives is my life.

can do better than their neighbours, do worse, nay rather what is most repugnant to their inclinations." "Verily," said Geburon, "though 'tis not altogether germane to our discourse, you call to my mind the case of a woman who did the contrary to her desires, whence arose a great uproar in the church of St John at Lyon." "I pray you," said Parlamente, "take my place and tell it us." "My tale," answered Geburon, "shall not be so long nor so pitiful as Parlamente's."

## NOVEL LXV.

*A very admirable miracle, which may serve as an example of all others.*

In the church of St John at Lyon there is a gloomy chapel, and in it a stone sepulchre to the mighty dead, whose figures are carven on it to the life, and around are men at arms devised as if asleep. And one day, during the heat of summer, a soldier walking about the church was fain to slumber, so, seeing this chapel that it was cool and shady, he was minded to keep guard over the sepulchre like his fellows in arms, amidst whom he laid himself down. Now it came to pass, as he was sleeping most soundly, an old woman, very devout, came thither, and having told her beads with a lighted candle in her hand, desired to fix the same to the sepulchre. And perceiving that the sleeping soldier was nearest to her, she would have set her candle on his forehead, thinking him to be of stone. But the wax not holding to the stone, the good woman, thinking its coldness was the cause, thrust the flame against his forehead, so as to make her taper stick to it. Then did the image, that was not altogether without feeling, begin to cry out,

whereat the old woman was so afraid, that she began to proclaim a miracle, and with such a voice, that all the priests within the church ran, some to ring the bells, and others to see the miracle. And the good woman led them to see the image that had moved, which was to a few a matter for laughter; but several priests were not so content with this, being determined to make this sepulchre bring them in as many pieces as the speaking crucifix on their pulpit; but the design came to an end by reason of the old woman's folly being publicly known.[1]

"If all knew the follies of these devout women, they would not be accounted holy, nor their miracles the truth. And henceforth, ladies, have a care to what saints you give your candles." "'Tis a great marvel," said Hircan, "that whatsoever they do, women always do ill." "Was this ill done," said Normerfide, "to bring candles to the sepulchre?" "Ay," answered Hircan, "inasmuch as she burnt a man's forehead, and no good is to be esteemed good if it be conjoined with evil. And are you of opinion that this woman thought she was offering a brave gift to God by setting up her poor taper?" Then said Oisille: "I make no account of the worth of the gift, but only of the heart of the giver. Perchance this poor woman had greater love for God than they that give fine torches, since, as it is written in the Gospel, she gave of her penury." "Yet I do not believe," said Saffredent, "that God, who is sovereign wisdom, can take pleasure in the foolishness of women; for, notwithstanding that He delights in

[1] The use of fictitious miracles had become so general a means of inciting to piety, that in 1516 the Lateran Council expressly rebuked the priesthood for countenancing these invented marvels, and cautioned the religious against the testimony of miraculous stories.

simpleness, I see in the Scripture that He despises the ignorant; and though we be commanded to be as harmless as doves, none the less are we charged to be as wise as serpents." "As for me," said Oisille, "I do not deem to be ignorant her who bears her torch or taper before God, making amends for her sins, humbly kneeling upon her knees, with candle in hand, before her Lord, and to Him confessing her unworthiness, craves, with steadfast hope, mercy and salvation." "Would to God," said Dagoucin, "they were all as you, but I do not believe these poor foolish women offer their candles with like intent." Oisille replied to him: "They that speak least know most of the love and will of God; wherefore it is not good to judge any save only oneself." Ennasuitte, laughing, said to her: "'Tis no strange thing to affright a sleeping knave, for women of as low estate have given alarm to great princes, and without the putting of a candle to their foreheads." "I am persuaded," said Geburon, "that you know some history which you would tell us. Wherefore take my place, if such be your pleasure." "My tale shall not be long," said Ennasuitte, "but if I can tell it as it fell out, you shall have no desire to weep."

## NOVEL LXVI.

*A lord and lady were mistaken by an old dame for a prothonotary and a servant maid, and were sharply reproved of her.*

During the year in which my lord of Vendôme espoused the Princess of Navarre,[1] the King and Queen,

[1] Jeanne d'Albret married Antoine de Bourbon, Duc de Vendôme, First Prince of the Blood, on the 20th of October 1543. "You never saw so

their father and mother, having been feasted at Vendôme, went into Guienne with them. And visiting the house of a gentleman, in the which were many fair maids, they danced for so long a time in this good company, that the bridegroom and his bride grew weary, and went to their chamber. There they threw themselves on a couch in their clothes, and slept from sheer fatigue. But in the midst of their slumbers they were awakened by the opening of a door, and my lord of Vendôme, drawing the curtain, looked to see who it was, supposing it to be one of his friends endeavouring

joyous a bride!" wrote King Henri II. of France; "she never does anything but laugh." It is a matter of history that Margaret opposed the marriage ("You never saw any one cry so much as my aunt," pursues the King), and it was only at the express command of her nephew that she could be induced to sign the marriage contract. Yet there is no sign of bitterness in this novel, which must have been written at a moment when, according to the letters of Henri II., Margaret was in the extreme of depression: "weeping for her daughter, disliking her son-in-law, at daggers drawn with her husband, and poor—so poor, I don't believe that altogether they keep ten gentlemen-in-waiting." It was by the express permission of the King that Jeanne was allowed to leave Paris to travel to the south with her father and mother. So long as Jeanne remained unwed, the French King feared to trust her from his sight lest her father wed her to a Spanish prince, and she remained in Paris — a necessity which the gay, pretty, and extravagant girl did not regret. But now that Jeanne was Duchess of Vendôme, she might be trusted. "I have heard," writes Henri II. to Montmorency, "that the King of Navarre intends to take his daughter with him to Nevers. I have determined to grant them the permission, for, having married their daughter, I think I have a sufficient hostage." . . . Jeanne lived happily with her husband, who fell, at the siege of Rouen, fighting for the Protestant cause. Jeanne still remained so valiant and so important a Huguenot, that the King of Spain used to lay plots to have her kidnapped as she was carried in her litter along the lonely Pyrennean roads. She escaped all these snares, but only to die rather mysteriously in Paris a little before the massacre of Saint Bartholomew. In 1589 her only son ascended the throne of France as Henri IV.

to take him by surprise. But in the stead thereof he beheld entering in a tall old bed-chamber woman, who for the darkness of the room knew them not, but fell at once to crying: "Ah! thou nasty wanton girl, 'tis a long time that I have suspected thee for what thou art, but for want of proof have not told my mistress! Now are thy wanton ways so manifest, that I am determined to cloak them no more. And thou, apostatical wretch, who hast brought such shame upon this house, by leading the poor wench astray, were it not for the fear of God I would beat thee soundly where thou liest. Arise, in the name of the devil, arise, for it seemeth as if there were no shame in thee!" My lord of Vendôme and his Princess, to make this discourse last the longer, hid their faces against one another, and laughed so heartily that they could not speak a word. But the old woman, perceiving that for all her threats they would not budge an inch, came near to them to have them forth by the arms. Then she knew both by their faces and their dress that they were not what she sought for; and recognising them, threw herself on her knees, entreating them to pardon her for disturbing their rest. But my lord of Vendôme, willing to learn somewhat more on the matter, arose incontinent, and would have the old woman tell him for whom she had mistaken them. This at first she would not confess, but having obtained their oath never to reveal it, she declared it was a girl of the house, with whom a prothonotary was in love; and said she had watched them a long while in her displeasure that her mistress put her trust in a man that would bring this shame upon the house. With this she left the Prince and Princess as she had found them, and they were mighty merry over the case. And though

they told the story again, yet they would never name the persons concerned in it.

"And so the good woman, thinking to execute a righteous judgment, made that manifest to strange princes, of which the servants of the house had never heard a word." "I shrewdly suspect," said Parlamente, "whose house it was, and who was the prothonotary, for he has governed many a lady's house for her, and when he is not able to gain the favour of the mistress, he will have that of her maids; but, for the rest, he is a good and honest gentleman." "Wherefore say you *for the rest*," said Hircan, "since it is for what you have told of him that I esteem him an honest gentleman?" "By this discourse of yours," said Simontault, "it would seem as if men took pleasure in the hearing evil of women, and I am assured that Parlamente will place me among such. Wherefore I desire greatly to speak well of one, that the rest hold me not as an evil speaker." "I give you my place," said Ennasuitte, "but pray you, have your natural disposition under control, so that you may quit you worthily in our honour." Then began Simontault: "'Tis no new thing, ladies, to hear some virtuous deed of yours, not worthy of forgetfulness, but rather fit to be written in letters of gold, for an ensample to women, and an admiration to men, seeing in the weaker vessel that which is repugnant to weakness. Wherefore I tell you this that I have heard from the lips of Captain Robertval[1] and from several of his fellowship."

[1] Jean-François de la Roque, Seigneur de Robertval, was not the first of the great sixteenth century discoverers who strove to make a French America to counterpoise the influence of Spain. Canada, discovered in 1497 by the Venetian Cabot, was soon turned to account. In 1539, Jacques Cartier sailed up the Saint Lawrence, took possession of the

## NOVEL LXVII.

*How a woman trusted in God amidst the lions.*

Captain Robertval once made a sea voyage, with certain vessels over which he was set by the King his master, to the island of Canada, where he was determined, if the air of the country should be found wholesome, to abide, and to build towns and mansions; and as to the beginning he made all men advised of it. And that Christianity might be spread abroad throughout the land, he took with him all manner of mechanics, amongst whom there was one so vile, that he betrayed his master, and put him in danger of being taken by the folk of the country. But God willed that his undertaking was brought to light before any hurt could befall the captain, who made seize this wicked traitor, and would have punished him according as he had deserved. And this had been done were it not for his wife, who, having followed her husband through all the dangers of

country in the name of King Francis I., and called it Nouvelle France. In 1541, Robertval set out to explore the extreme north of Canada, and in 1542 he built the Fort of Charlebourg. He established a colony in the Isle Royale. All through the early half of the sixteenth century it was the dearest dream of France and England to outwit Spain and her new world by the discovery of some new treasure countries of their own. I remember several references to this idea in the manuscript letters of the Cardinal du Bellay, preserved in the National Library at Paris. A futile Austrian impostor was actually despatched by Henry VIII. to discover some fabulous gold mines in Hungary, which he declared he could secretly excavate for the King. (This was at the time of the alliance with John Zapolya.) And in the same year, 1530, Du Bellay, at a dinner at Hampton Court, having come to angry words with the Spanish Ambassador, bade him beware, "lest, if you provoke our King too much by keeping his children from him, we do you a great harm, 'non en Espaigne, en Flandre ou autre certain heu, mais ez Indes et Arabies."'

the sea, would not leave him to perish, but by her tears and lamentations worked so with the captain and all his company, that as much for pity of her as for the services she had done him, he granted her desire. And this was for the husband and wife to be left on a little island in mid-ocean, where dwelt no people, but only ravening wild beasts; and it was likewise granted that they should take thither such things as were needful to them. So the poor folk, finding themselves all alone amid the fierce brutes, had no help but in God, who had always been the steadfast hope of the wife; and she, gaining from Him all her consolation, carried for her safeguard, comfort, and nourishment the New Testament, in which she read without ceasing. And as to temporal affairs, she and her husband laboured to build them as good a house as they were able, and when the lions and other beasts came near to devour them, the husband with his arquebuss, and she with stones, made so stout a defence, that they not only kept them at a distance, but very often killed some that were good provender; so with such meats and the herbs of the island they lived some time, after their bread had failed them. At length the husband could no more bear with such victuals, and for the water he drank became so swollen that, after a few days, he died, having no servant nor consoler save his wife, who was to him both parson and physician; thus passed he from that wilderness to the heavenly country. And his poor wife, left alone, buried him in the earth as deeply as she could, but yet the beasts straightway smelt him out and came to devour the flesh of him; and she in her little hut shot at them with her arquebuss, so that her husband's body should not have such a sepulture. So

living as to her body the life bestial, as to her soul the life angelical, she spent her time in reading of the Scriptures, in prayers and in meditations, having a joyful and contented mind within a body that was shrunken away and nigh amort. But He who never forsaketh His own, and who, when there is no hope in man, showeth His strength, did not allow that the virtue he had set in this woman should be hid from men, but willed rather that it should be made manifest unto His glory. So at the end of some time one of the ships of the armament passing by the island, the folk that were in it saw a smoke that put them in mind of them that had been left there, and they determined to see how God had dealt with them. The poor woman, seeing the ship draw near, went down to the strand, where she was when they came. And after praising God for it, she brought them to her hut, and showed them what manner of victuals she had eaten during her stay; the which would have passed their belief, had they not known that God can as well feed His servants in a wilderness as at a prince's feast. And since she could not abide in such a place, they took her with them to Rochelle, whither after their voyage they came, and made known to all that dwelt therein her faithfulness and patient long-suffering. And on this account she was received by all the ladies with great honour, and they with goodwill gave her their daughters that she might teach them to read and write. And in this honest craft she earned a livelihood, always exhorting all men to love our Lord and put their trust in Him, setting forth by way of example the great compassion he had shown towards her.

"Henceforth, ladies, you cannot deny that I laud

and magnify the virtues that God hath placed in you, the which show themselves the more as the subject is of small account." "We are in nowise sorry," said Oisille, "that you praise the grace of our Lord, for in truth all virtue doth come from Him; and the work of man is no more esteemed of God than that of woman, since neither the one nor the other, by their own heart and will, can do anything but plant, and God alone giveth the increase." "If you have well read the Scriptures," said Saffredent, "you will know that it is written: 'I have planted and Apollos watered,' but St Paul sayeth not that women have put their hands to the work of God." "You would fain follow," said Parlamente, "the evil example of them that take the Scripture that is for them, and leave that is against them. If you read St Paul to the end you will find that he commends himself to the ladies who have greatly toiled with him in the work of the Gospel." "Howsoever that may be," said Longarine, "this woman is worthy of all praise, as much for her love for her husband, for whom she put her life in jeopardy, as for her faith in God, who, as we have seen, did by no means forsake her." "As to the first," said Ennasuitte, "I suppose there is no wife here present who, to save the life of her husband, would not do the like." "I do believe," said Parlamente, "that some husbands are such beastly folk, that their wives should not find it strange to live amidst the beasts." Ennasuitte, taking this to herself, must needs say: "Save in the matter of biting, the company of beasts is as pleasant to me as that of man, who indeed is choleric and hardly to be borne. But still I maintain that, if my husband were to be in such a case, I would not forsake him for the fear of death." . . .

"Beware," said Nomerfide, "of loving too much; for make a mock of me as you will, yet to think upon death makes the heart to grow cold, be it never so young." "I should be of your opinion," said Dagoucin, "had I not heard to the contrary from a princess." "That is to say," said Parlamente, "that she recounted to you some tale. Wherefore, if it be so, I give you my place for the telling of it." And Dagoucin began thus: "This story the Duchess of Alençon, herself related to me."

## NOVEL LXXII.

*The case of a monk and a nun that sinned in the presence of the dead.*

In one of the fairest towns in France there is an hospital, well endowed—namely, with a prioress and fifteen or sixteen nuns, and in another part of the building a prior and seven or eight monks. And these day by day sang their offices, and those were content with paternosters and the Hours of Our Lady, since they were altogether occupied in the service of the sick. One day there was a poor man at the point of death, and all the nuns were around him, who, after they had done all that was in their power for his health, sent for one of the monks to confess him. Then seeing he still grew weaker, extreme unction was given him, and little by little he lost the power of speech. But insomuch as he tarried a long time and did not pass, and seemed able to hear them, each of the nuns set herself to speak to him after the best sort she could, whereat at length they grew weary; and when night was come and he was still alive, one by one they went away to bed. And

there remained, for the making of the body ready for burial, but one of the youngest nuns and a monk, whom she feared more than the prior or any other by reason of the great austerity of his words and life. And when they had duly chanted their hours in the dead man's ear they saw that he was dead, so they made him ready for burial. But in the exercising of this last work of mercy the monk fell to speaking on the miseries of this life and the exceeding happiness of death, and while he discoursed to this effect it struck midnight. The poor girl listened with due attention to his words, and looked on him with tears in her eyes, whereat he took such delight that, speaking of the life to come, he began to embrace her, as if he desired to carry her in his arms to Paradise. She, accounting him for the most devout of all the monks, durst not refuse him, and perceiving this, speaking of God all the while, a sudden temptation overcame him, which surely the devil had of an instant put into his heart; for before he had never attempted any such thing. And he persuaded her that a sin that is done in secret is not imputed to men by God, that two people with no ties could do no offence in this manner,[1] if there was no scandal, to the avoidance of which she must take heed to confess to none but him. So they departed thence, she going first; and passing through the Lady Chapel, she would say her prayers therein, as she was wont. But when she

[1] This is very characteristic of the sixteenth century, when the child of two unmarried persons suffered but slight disgrace for his birth if the parents were single. The breaking of the tie of marriage was accounted a far more grievous sin. This, which is proved by Acts of Legitimacy and other records, is also apparent in the frivolous talk of the "Heptameron." Even Hircan and Saffredent, the choice apologists of rakes, enjoin fidelity in marriage.

began: "Virgin Mary," she remembered that she had lost, on no love nor compulsion, but through a foolish fear, the style and title of virginity, and so bitterly did she weep that it seemed as though her heart would break. The monk, hearing the noise of her lamentation from afar, feared lest she was converted, and coming to her found her with her face to the ground before Our Lady. Therefore he sharply rebuked her, and said that if she made it a matter of conscience, she might confess to him, and be quit of him if she would; for one way or the other there was no sin.

The foolish nun, thinking to make satisfaction before God, went to confession, but for penance he only swore that she sinned not at all to love him, and such a petty fault could be washed away with holy water. She, trusting more in him than in God, returned at the end of some time to his obedience, in such sort that she became great with child. At this sorely vexed, she prayed the prioress to drive away the monk from the convent, since he was so crafty that he would not fail to seduce her. The prior and the prioress, who dwelt in good accord together, made a mock of her, telling her she was big enough to defend herself against a man, and that he of whom she spoke was too devout to do such a deed. At last, driven by the gnawing of her conscience, she craved leave of them to go to Rome, for she thought, if she could but confess her sins at the feet of the Pope, her maidenhead would come back to her. This the prior and the prioress granted her with a good will, for they had rather that against their rule she should go on a pilgrimage, than continue within the convent with her present scruples. And they feared also lest in her despair she should blaze abroad the life

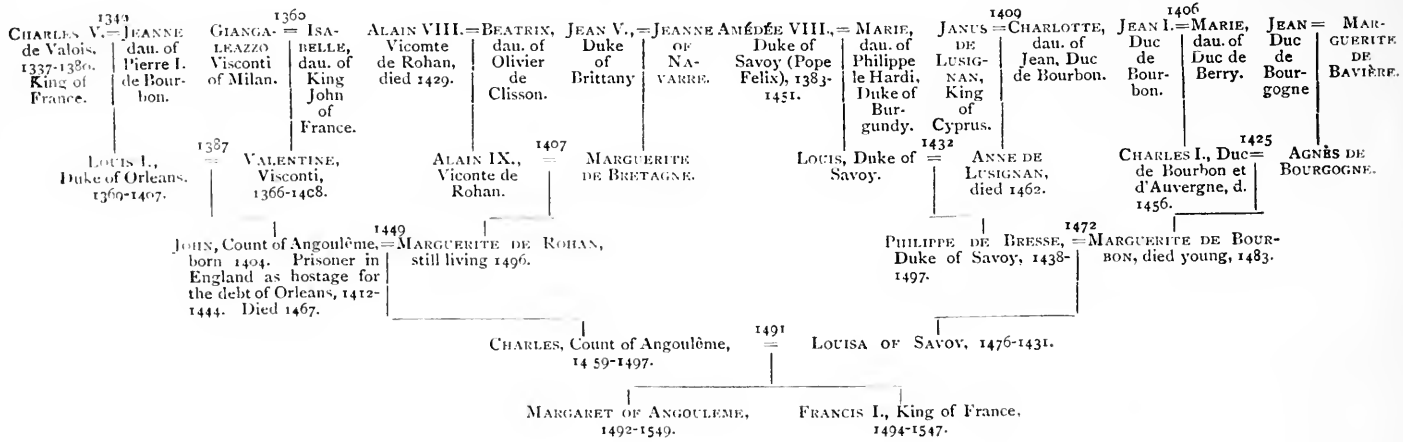
that was led in the convent, and so he gave her money for her journey. But God willed that she should be in the rood-gallery of the church of St John at Lyon, after evensong; and there was also in the church the Duchess of Alençon, who was afterwards Queen of Navarre, who was privily performing a nine days' devotion, having with her three or four of her women.[1] And she, kneeling on her knees before the rood, heard some one mounting the stair to the loft, and by the light of the lamp perceived that it was a nun. And to the end that she might hear her devotions the Duchess withdrew herself to a dark corner hard-by the altar. But the nun, who thought she was alone, fell on her knees, and beating her breast, wept so that it was pitiful to hear her, crying all the while: "My God, my God, have mercy upon me a sinner!" The Duchess, so as to come at the root of the matter, drew near to her and said: "Sweetheart, what ails you, and whence come you, and what brings you hither?" The poor nun, who knew her not, answered and said: "Alas, sweetheart, so great is my woe that I look to God alone, and pray Him to grant me the means of speaking to the Duchess of Alençon, since I am assured if there be cure for my sickness she will find it out." "Sweetheart," said the Duchess, "you may speak to me as to her, for I am of her most familiar acquaintance." "Nay," said the nun, "no other than she shall be advertised of my secret." Then the Duchess told her that she might speak freely, since she had found that she sought for;

[1] Margaret first came to Lyons in 1524. There died Queen Claude, and there, in the April of next year, the unfortunate Duke of Alençon. It was for him, perchance, that Margaret was performing her Novena, when she overheard the agony of the unhappy nun.

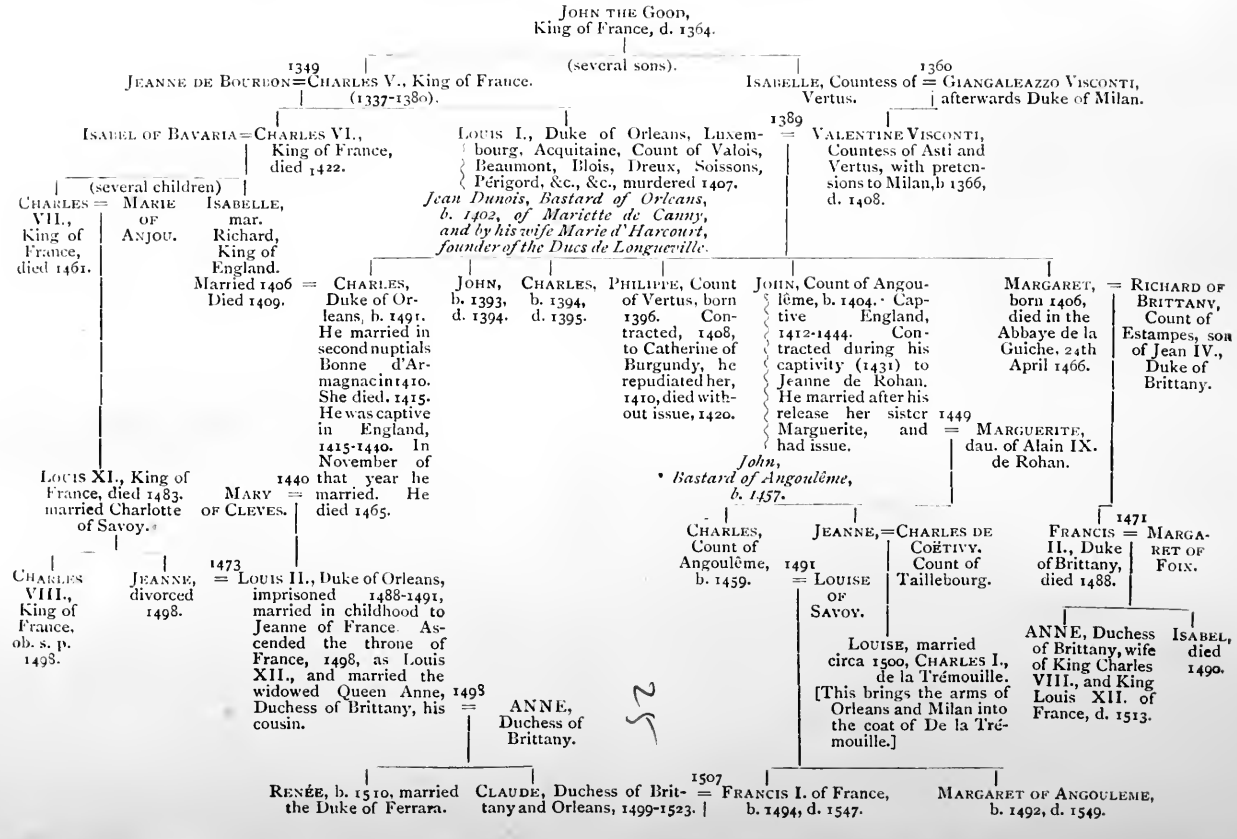
and the poor woman threw herself at her feet, and told her the whole matter, as you have heard it, and how she fell into her mischance. The Duchess comforted her so well that she still left her a continual repentance for her sin ; but put out of her brain the intent to go to Rome. And so she sent her back to her priory with letters to the bishop of the diocese charging him to drive away that shameful monk.

[Here end the Novels of the late Queen of Navarre, since no more of them can be found.]

# PEDIGREE OF MARGARET OF ANGOULEME.



# HOUSE OF ORLEANS.



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